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THE PAGEANT OF  
NETHERLANDS HISTORY



THE PAGEANT  
OF  
NETHERLANDS  
HISTORY



Adriaan J. Barnouw

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THE PAGEANT OF NETHERLANDS HISTORY

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## PREFACE

The title which the publishers have chosen for the books in this series gives the authors ample leeway in assembling and marshaling their historical material. According to the definition of the *Oxford Dictionary* a pageant is "a procession arranged for effect." Since it is effect that the author must seek to produce, he should feel free to select from the vast mass of past events such scenes and episodes as will offset each other and will create through contrast and variety the pictorial qualities that can make it attractive. His book will bear a resemblance to the late-medieval spectacles staged in the towns of Flanders and Brabant, such as the grand procession held on the first Sunday after the Assumption of the Holy Virgin in the city of Brussels. Paintings were carried along on floats depicting scenes from the Old and the New Testaments, and others passed by on which players presented stories from the Scriptures. The artists and actors who stage-managed these shows did not attempt to give a consecutive recital of the complete Bible story. They depicted those scenes and enacted those episodes that would startle the spectators by their pictorial or emotional elements. Not completeness of the story presented but the beauty of its presentation was their aim.

This *Pageant of Netherlands History* does not tell a complete and consecutive story either. The author offers a subjective presentation of the past, since the choice of incidents and persons that appear in his procession and the order in which they are arranged have been dictated by the writer's personal

preference and taste. The heroics of battlefields and wars do not figure prominently in its pages, and the intrigues and triumphs of diplomacy, the treaties concluded or broken, the deliberations of Parliaments and Council rooms are referred to only when they profoundly affected the life of the people. It is with the people of the Netherlands that this story is chiefly concerned, with their manners and customs, their beliefs and their labors, their achievements in the fields of learning, letters, and the arts. It is a history, in other words, in which special emphasis is laid on what is called the culture or the civilization of the Netherlands.

The concept expressed by the word civilization must be an ancient one, yet the need for giving it a name did not arise, it seems, before the eighteenth century. The English of that age were not agreed yet on what to call it. Boswell, one day, had an argument about it with Samuel Johnson. He entered the Doctor's study on March 23, 1772, and found him busy preparing the fourth edition of his dictionary. "He would not admit *civilization*," Boswell wrote, "but only *civility*. With great deference to him I thought *civilization*, from to civilize, better in the sense opposed to *barbarity*, than *civility*; as it is better to have a distinct word for each sense, than one word with two senses, which *civility* is, in his way of using it."

*Barbarity*, which Boswell felt to be the opposite of the term in dispute, is a much older word. It was already in use in Shakespeare's time. That is not surprising. The true nature of what we mean by civilization is hard to define, but the lack of it in others is readily noticed and denounced.

The term culture is not exactly synonymous with civilization. It stresses the educational processes by which the opposite of barbarity is achieved. It suggests a comparison of the human intellect with land under tillage, both being improved by cul-

tivation. That is doubtless the reason why in most languages its meaning is restricted to the development of some special discipline or to the breeding of an individual. We speak of a man of culture, of the culture of the intellect, of the religious life, of good manners. But we prefer civilization when we mean to encompass the whole of which these are but so many facets. Dr. Lin Yutang has drawn a sharp distinction between civilization and culture in an imaginary conversation which he contributed to *America Now, An Inquiry into Civilization in the United States*.<sup>\*</sup> He narrowed the meaning of civilization to the things seen and the comforts of life, "while culture refers to the things unseen." According to him "Material civilization is a proper basis for culture, but not culture itself."

There does not seem to be any justification for that statement in our actual usage. One might just as well maintain the opposite by reversing the terms. We speak of "physical culture," and subscribe to the old Latin maxim *Mens sana in corpore sano*, a healthy mind in a healthy body, which is tantamount to saying that body culture is a proper basis for civilization. "Culture" is not exclusively applied to the intangible, nor is "civilization" restricted to material things. The latter is a vastly broader term, including all concepts which individually can be described as forms of culture.

The Dutch have eluded the choice between the competing terms. They have rejected both and coined a word from the ore of their native speech. They call the indefinable opposite of barbarity *Beschaving*. The verb *schaven*, etymologically identical with English *shave*, is the Dutch term for what the English carpenter calls "planing." *Beschaven* means literally "to smoothe with a plane," and figuratively, "to civilize." The term "smoothe" is used in America in a derogatory sense; Americans

<sup>\*</sup> Edited by Harold E. Stearns, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938.

despise the polish of the slick customer. They prefer a rough diamond. But to the Dutch of the eighteenth century, when the word *beschaving* came into vogue, the smoothness that resulted from *beschaving* was associated with the refinement of French life and manners and they regarded it as a passport that admitted the bearer into the best society.

Planing is a treatment of the wood's surface, and *beschaving* that merely results in surface polish is not equivalent to civilization. The civilized man is much more than merely polite, he is first and foremost, as the term implies, a good citizen, a man who is conscious of his obligations towards his fellow men. He obeys the laws, is tolerant of other men's opinions, practices charity, fosters education, encourages the arts. He lives with and for his fellow citizens. He is therefore a finer and more worth-while person than what the Frenchman calls *un homme poli*. This French term is on the surface the exact equivalent of a *beschaafd* man. But Dutch usage has raised the latter to a higher point in the scale of values. Its rise to nobility was made possible, it would seem, by the existence of a synonym that was capable of taking its place. The Dutch equivalent of "a polite man" is *een beleefd man*. *Beleefd* means originally "having experienced life," and from that sense developed the meaning "courteous."

Here again the fundamental idea is that of communion, of fellowship and human intercourse as molders of civilized man. Only by the rubbing of elbows and minds do people acquire the polish that makes them *beschaafd*. Civilization and culture do not grow in a hermit's cell. An anchorite may be a learned man, but his voluntary seclusion from communion with his fellow creatures springs from impulses that are incompatible with civilization. He is not a *civis*, a citizen, and his flight into solitude is prompted by motives that are uncivil.



The people of the Low Countries have never avoided the fellowship of their neighbors. As seafarers and traders they have freely mingled with strangers of different speech and manners, and such international intercourse has given them that polish and breeding that make for culture and civilization. To recount the unfolding of what they call their *Beschaving* is the aim of this book.

A. J. B.

New York  
August, 1951



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THE PAGEANT OF  
NETHERLANDS HISTORY



## CHAPTER I

### LAND OF MONASTERIES

**T**HE BEGINNINGS of Dutch civilization coincide with the dawn of the Christian era. That was purely accidental. The gospel was not preached in the Netherlands until three centuries had passed after the death of Christ. But it so happened that at the time when Jesus preached in Palestine the Romans began to occupy and to colonize the Low Countries. And we owe to them the earliest reports about the inhabitants of those wild, wind-swept lands in the northwest of the European continent.

Those inhabitants themselves were not capable of leaving to posterity an account of their existence. They were not crude savages, though, devoid of any culture. They were a mixed race, partly Celtic, partly Germanic, and they shared with the Germanic and Celtic tribes then scattered over the vast expanse of northern Europe religious beliefs and cults about which we possess but scant information. They had priests and priestesses who knew the means of preserving in metal and stone a record of facts that were held to be memorable. These inscriptions tell us little of historical importance. A sword blade will reveal to us in runes the name of the man who made or owned it; it will not mention the battles in which it was wielded. Most runic writings are so laconic that they hardly deserve to be regarded as historical records.

The runes were never used to preserve the songs and incantations that must have formed part of their religious rites. These

were held to be too sacred to be tied up in legible formulas. They led a free, untrammelled life in the memories and on the tongues of the celebrants; their imprisonment in runic script would have been desecration.

Hence the knowledge that we possess of the early inhabitants of the Low Countries is derived from Latin sources. These have to be used with much caution and skepticism, for the Romans had but a superficial knowledge of the people they wrote about. They did not know their language and could not have an inkling of their inner life. They can tell us how they prepared their food, how they were housed and dressed, in what array they went to war. They cannot tell us what they thought and how they reasoned. Tacitus, it is true, has attempted to give his fellow Romans an insight into the character and the minds of these people. But it is a fanciful and idealized picture that was to put his countrymen to shame by its contrast to their own degraded morals. The rottenness of Roman civilization was uppermost in Tacitus' mind, the unspoiled mode of life of these northern primitives only served him as a foil to show up the degeneracy of Rome.

Latin authors, then, make us little the wiser about the earliest Dutch. But they tell us something about what the Romans did in the Netherlands. And that was a great deal. Americans are brought up with the idea that colonization is a wicked system of tyranny and exploitation and that all colonies are bloodstained blots on the map of the world. That is a prejudice due to lack of historical perspective.

Most history is a record of the gradual emergence of peoples from a state of colonial subjection to freedom and autonomy. The whole of western Europe was once a colony of Rome, and owes to Roman civilization its early training for that march of progress that ultimately led to independent nationhood. The



colonial Powers of modern times are not the wicked slave drivers they are depicted to be in certain sections of the American press; the French and British in Africa, the latter in India, the Dutch in Indonesia have performed a civilizing mission not dissimilar to that which the Romans accomplished with such signal success in western Europe. It is useless to ask what would have become of the old Continent if Rome had not laid the groundwork for its cultural and political life. But we can safely say without fear of contradiction that its emergence from chaos and barbarism would have been retarded for many centuries.

Europe, indeed, has reason to thank Providence that at the dawn of the Christian era it was colonized by Roman conquerors. Roman armies occupied the undeveloped territories of the Celtic and Germanic tribes, built roads and bridges, founded fortified towns at the crossings of roads and along the rivers, and kept the various tribes from warring against one another. Roman traders and merchants brought the products of Mediterranean agriculture, arts, and crafts to the remotest regions of Gaul, Germany, and Britain; Roman civil administrators established law and order and laid the foundations for a civilized society.

The rivers in those early days were the main arteries of commerce. In the southern Netherlands, which is present-day Belgium, they ran from south to north; they did not bind the east and the west, just as the rivers of the North American continent do not form a bond between the Pacific coast and the eastern seaboard. Not until the railways were built, crossing the rivers at right angles, did the United States of America become an integrated whole. In the same way, the Romans, in order to bind east and west, built a cross-country artery in the southern Netherlands, a fortified highway that ran from Cologne on the Rhine to Boulogne on the seacoast. It crossed the Maas at Maas-

tricht, the Scheldt at Kamerijk, which the French call Cambrai, and thence bent northwest toward the sea.

That road served its purpose of binding the eastern and western Low Countries together. But by an ironic twist of fate it was also destined to mark, in the course of the succeeding centuries, the dividing line between north and south. Part of its course ran through a dense, inhospitable forest, which the medieval chroniclers called *Nemus sine Misericordia*, the Forest without Mercy. It was shunned by all who were settled north and south of it. The Roman road that pierced it left it unconquered; it relieved its darkness as little as a tunnel softens the hardness of the enveloping rock. The merchant caravans that had to pass through entered its gloom in trepidation and thanked their gods or their guardian spirits when they emerged unharmed at the other end.

The tribes that had settled south of the forest lost touch with their kindred in the north; they were near neighbors of Gaul, and the Roman civilization of Gaul soon cast its spell upon them. They dropped their native speech, and adopted the language of romanized Gaul. Hence the people who now inhabit the southern part of present-day Belgium do not speak the language of the Netherlands but a dialectal variety of French. The name by which they are known among their Dutch-speaking countrymen is indicative of their mutual estrangement: these call them Walen (Walloons), an old Germanic term for aliens. Few remnants are left of the Forest without Mercy; man's hunger for arable land and his need of wood for timber, fuel, and tools made him conqueror over its terrors. But the cleavage it caused between the Belgian people has endured into the twentieth century and is not likely ever to be effaced.

Since the dreaded forest did not raise a barrier across the whole width of the Low Countries, its impenetrability cannot

have been the sole cause of the linguistic split. The Romans had fortified the road over its entire length so that it could serve as an outer wall of defense against the tribes that kept surging west out of the German lands across the Rhine. When the Roman empire began to weaken, the Romans concentrated their forces along this road in order to protect the Roman civilization of Gaul. Hence the region south of the road became the zone of safety under Roman law and order, and all who found shelter there learned to speak and to adopt as their own the romanized language of Gaul.

That romanized language came to be known by the name of French, that is, the speech of the Franks. The Franks were a Germanic tribe that must have excelled in martial spirit or in talent for organization, for it succeeded in drawing all surrounding tribes within its orbit either by armed force or by the glamour of its power. Thus reinforced, the Franks invaded Gaul and settled there among its romanized population, which in its turn romanized the Franks. These adopted the language of Gaul, which is a Romance language, an offspring of Latin, but that offspring of Latin retains in its name a reminder that the conquerors of Gaul were of Germanic stock. For French meant originally Frankish, and France is the realm of the Franks.

The pagan tribes north of the Roman road retained their native idioms. These were all dialectal varieties of the Celtic or the Germanic mother tongues, for at the time of the Roman colonization the Low Countries presented a crazy quilt of tribes, each of which spoke a distinct variety of the parent language. But just as the different tribes in the south gradually merged in the master tribe of the Franks, so those farther north, in course of time, lost their identity in larger units of tribal groups. There were two such units besides that of the Franks, the Frisian group

in the west and north, and the Saxon group east of the Frisians and Franks. The Frisians, who occupied the North Sea coast, were skilled seafarers; the Saxons were huntsmen and tillers of the soil. It is from these tribal groups that the people of the Netherlands and Belgium have sprung. Traces of a Celtic substratum are found in Belgium and on the islands of Zeeland, dark-haired and dark-eyed people of smaller stature; but in their speech they are indistinguishable from their fellow countrymen, since they have adopted the Germanic language of their neighbors.

That is the language we call Dutch, meaning the people's language, as distinct from Latin, the language of the Church. It is spoken in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and in the northern part of Belgium. It developed from a western variety of the language of the Franks and became in the later Middle Ages the standard language of the Low Countries. By its side the old tribal idioms lived on; they are still spoken, in spite of the leveling influence of modern school education, in rural districts all over the country. And in the province of Friesland the Frisian language is still a vital element not only in the rural but also in the cultural life of the people. Frisian is very different from Dutch and incomprehensible to Dutchmen from other parts of the Netherlands. All Frieslanders understand Dutch, but few non-Frisian Dutchmen understand Frisian. It is not a dialectal variety of Dutch but a separate Germanic language with a rich and flourishing literature of its own.

Frisians, Saxons, and Franks were pagans when they entered upon the stage of history. The spread of Christianity was facilitated by the building of the Roman road across the southern Netherlands; still the gospel was not brought to the Low Countries from Rome. It came to them from Greece by way of the Danube and the Rhine; its first missionaries must have reached

them in the wake of traders and merchants who brought the treasures of the East by the great continental rivers to the shores of the North Sea. It is not so surprising then, as it would seem at first glance, that the founder of the first bishopric in the Netherlands was an Armenian. The tomb of a Frankish king who was buried in 475 at Doornik has yielded up a rich collection of golden ornaments that bear the stamp of Gothic influence, if not of Gothic workmanship. In those days the Goths, another Germanic tribe, occupied large regions in southeast Europe; the art of their goldsmiths was brought to the Franks in northwest Europe along the same route by which the Armenian traveled who brought them the golden treasure of the gospel.

He was called Servatius; by that un-Armenian name, at any rate, he is known in church history. We must not think of him as living among the heathen of the north in self-chosen exile. He remained in touch with the country he came from, and traveled in 343 to the Council of Sardica in the Balkans, where he sided with the majority in condemning the Arian heresy. But he returned to his flock on the banks of the Maas and lived among them for more than forty years, first at Tongeren, subsequently at Maastricht, whither he transferred the see of his diocese for greater safety. There he died in 384, revered as a holy man by his converts. Succeeding generations preserved and added to the legend of the Maastricht saint not only within the confines of his diocese, but all along the route that connected it with southeast Europe: the churches of Duisburg, Worms, Augsburg, Regensburg, Passau, and Salzburg shared with the church of Maastricht in the veneration of the Armenian saint.

Maastricht, then, was not an isolated outpost of Christianity. We know no details about its early contacts with the Greek metropolis, nor can we tell whether Byzantine culture exerted

any influence on the growth of the first episcopal see in the Netherlands. It probably did, for it is significant that Maastricht became the cradle of Dutch art and letters. A native of that city, Heynrick van Veldeke, was the first on record to write Dutch poetry, and when the German poet Wolfram von Eschenbach wrote his great epic *Parsifal*, Maastricht was known throughout Germany as the seat of a flourishing school of painting. When Wolfram wanted to describe the hero of his poem as he appeared on horseback, he wrote that no artist of Cologne or Maastricht could have painted a more beautiful picture. Both Heynrick and Wolfram lived in the late twelfth century, eight hundred years after Servatius. Very little is known about the growth of Dutch civilization during that near-millennium; we cannot prove that the Maastricht school of art, as it flourished around the year 1200, had its beginnings in Byzantine culture. But it seems more than likely that at an early date under Byzantine influence an artistic tradition was established at Maastricht that came to full flowering in the late Middle Ages.

There was peace in the Low Countries when Servatius founded his bishopric. But during his administration it began to be threatened by raids from across the Rhine, the first storm signals of a large-scale invasion. The Germanic tribes were a restless people. Their agricultural methods were primitive. Unskilled in the art of making the soil produce a yield that sufficed for their needs, they were repeatedly forced to seek new arable land for their growing numbers. Hunger, rather than lust for conquest, drove them west. Not all the tribe decamped; every now and then a surplus departed, which in the new settlement remained in touch with those they left behind. In the fourth century these treks gained in frequency until they became a dire menace to the peace of the Roman provinces west and south of the lower Rhine.

Those groups that spearheaded the large-scale Germanic invasion were called hundreds because they consisted of ten dozens \* of free families with their retinues of servants and slaves. Each hundred was responsible for the administration of the *Mark*, the territory they occupied. The land was owned communally, but divided among the families for individual tillage. They elected a headman or king to lead them in war or on the trek; in peacetime, as a rule, they managed without one. Their religion was an animistic worship of the forces of nature. But these pagans were skilled in the crafts of the weaver and the goldsmith, which raised them above the state of barbarism.

It was the fear of this invasion that induced Servatius to leave Tongeren and seek safety behind the fortified walls of Maastricht. His flight availed him little, for Christianity suffered a setback throughout the land under the impact of the heathen onrush. But a century after Servatius' death a better time dawned. In 496 King Clovis of the Franks accepted baptism. His conversion was a signal triumph for the Christian church, for it won thereby the protection of a powerful ruler who had unified the Franks and their satellite tribes under his command. For Clovis, with unchristian ruthlessness, had ousted all the other Frankish war lords from power and made himself sole ruler of the Franks in Gaul and the Netherlands. He wielded a power such as no warrior king of the migration period had ever aspired to. He had, in fact, succeeded to the supremacy of ancient Rome, and by accepting baptism he gained the sanction of the Church of Rome for his usurpation.

In return the Church obtained political support for its mission work among the yet unconverted masses. Servatius was fortunate in his successors. These were all men of noble birth

\* *The word hundred in pre-Christian Germanic meant one hundred and twenty.*

who could deal with the warrior kings of pagan tribes as social equals, for conversion had to begin at the top. The headman was approached first; if he refused to accept baptism the preacher's mission was doomed to failure. Even the conversion of the king and his warriors gave no guarantee that the mass of the people would follow. That became clear to Amandus, who won for himself the title of Apostle of the Belgians. He received from Clotaire, King of the Franks, the title of bishop and settled with a group of followers at the confluence of the Scheldt and the Lys, the spot where subsequently the city of Ghent was to arise. But the people of that region were not easily won over to the Christian faith.

They refused to be coerced into baptism and rose up in revolt. Amandus, disheartened, turned his back upon them and went to preach the gospel in the valley of the Danube. The ancient ties with southeast Europe were apparently not yet severed, and Amandus, in his new field of action, kept in touch with the mission in the Low Countries. He returned about 647 and took charge of the see of Servatius. But his stay in Maastricht was not for long. He seems to have been a restless spirit, better suited to a missionary's wanderings than to a bishop's sedentary life. In 650 he resigned his episcopal dignity, donned a monk's habit, and started preaching and winning converts. In his old age he retired to the monastery of Elnon, which he had founded not far from the royal residence at Doornik. There the restless Apostle of the Belgians was laid to rest about the year of our Lord 675.

His work was continued by Eligius in the valley of the Scheldt, by Remaclus in the valley of the Maas, and by Hubert, the last bishop of Maastricht, who converted the remaining heathen in Brabant and the mountainous region of the Ardennes. All three were canonized after death; and popular fancy embroidered the stories of their lives with legendary lore that endeared them to



later generations. Especially Eligius, patron of goldsmiths, and Hubert, patron of huntsmen, were popular saints in the Middle Ages. They were known and invoked far and wide beyond the region of their apostolic activities, and medieval art spread the fame of their miracles among the illiterate masses.

Eligius, says the legend, was a farrier before he became a goldsmith. He employed a journeyman who used to cut off the horse's foot that needed shoeing. He laid the foot on the anvil, shoed it without the necessity of keeping the animal quiet, and put it back into position without leaving any trace of the amputation. That journeyman, the legend asserts, was our Saviour, and from Christ Eligius learned to perform this miraculously painless operation.

Hubert is said to have been a scion of a noble house of Aquitaine. One day, while hunting, he saw a stag that carried a radiant crucifix between its antlers; overawed by the vision he let himself be converted to Christianity and became a servant of the true God. This miracle of the stag has been depicted by many early artists, by none more impressively than Albrecht Dürer, who did a magnificent engraving of Hubert's vision.

The people's belief in such miracles is part of the stuff of which history is made. They deserve to be recorded not as actual happenings but as imaginative creations in which we behold a reflection of the medieval mind. Their popularity is evidence of the common delight in fairy stories.

The legends of the saints satisfied the human craving for magic and romance, and fantastic fairy lore gained a semblance of credibility by being presented as the work of a holy superman. The two stories of the farrier's assistant and the cross-carrying deer are doubtless much older than the legends in which they are embodied. They are relics of the oral literature of the pagan past, the residue of prehistoric fiction dear to the people, who

knew no better way of preserving them than by entrusting them to the protection of their saints. The pious missionaries who had taught them to forswear their pagan gods were credited, after their canonization, with the magical powers they had denied to the heathen pantheon.

That is how St. Nicholas became the most popular of all saints in the Netherlands. There was no apparent reason why the Dutch of all people should cherish the memory of a holy bishop whose ministrations had benefited the faraway diocese of Myra in Asia Minor. It is indeed difficult to account for the West-European cult of this Near-Eastern saint. Some years ago a German scholar, Dr. Karl Meisen, put forth the theory that the festival of Santa Claus springs from a glorification of St. Nicholas as the patron saint of school children. He laid stress on the fact that Byzantine hagiography does not know the story of the miraculous resurrection by the Myra bishop of three little scholars whom the butcher at whose house they lodged for the night had murdered and chopped into meatballs. That story, Meisen argued, must have been fabricated in western Europe for the purpose of setting up St. Nicholas as the patron of children. It was through the schools that his cult was spread all over Europe. The rod that he carries is, according to Meisen, not a pagan symbol of fertility, for which the folklorists take it, but the schoolmaster's instrument for castigation of the unruly child. St. Nicholas Eve, then, is essentially a school-children's feast in honor of the benefactor who brings them not only presents and sweetmeats but the greatest gift of all: education.

It cannot be denied that the school has been instrumental in popularizing St. Nicholas and the schoolmen of the Middle Ages may have fostered his cult deliberately. But that does not explain why the good bishop, mounted on a white horse, rides over the roofs at midnight and enters the house through the

chimney flue, the traditional passageway of spirits. Woden, the god of the Germanic heathen, rode through the winter sky on his white horse Sleipnir, scattering gifts among mortals. St. Nicholas on horseback is a Christian substitute for that pagan night rider. The historical bishop of Myra owes his popularity in northwest Europe to the age-old belief, dear to the people, in a divine dispenser of winter blessings.

It was the policy of the early Church thus to christianize heathen beliefs. Pope Gregory I instructed its missionaries not to destroy but to transform what was pagan. Inherited rites and practices that were dear to their converts were given a new religious content. Groves and wells and hilltops where ancient deities used to be worshipped were rededicated to Christian saints. Some of the oldest churches in the Netherlands stand on sites that were the scenes of pagan ceremonies before the advent of the missionaries. That wise policy bore abundant fruit, for the people were more easily won over to a new faith that did not rob them of their own but gave it fresh value and meaning.

This conciliatory practice of the early Church has left its imprint on the names that we give to the days of the week. The gods of the Ancients, the pantheon of the Germanic tribes, and the Lord Christ are joined in the calendar in peaceful sequence. The day of the Sun which we call the day of the Lord is sandwiched in between the days of Saturn and the Moon, and the remaining four are called for the heathen gods of our Germanic forefathers: Tuesday for Tiw, Wednesday for Woden, Thursday for Thor, Friday for Freya.

The days were not given these names because they belonged to gods but because they belonged to planets. It was the power of the planets, medieval man believed, that regulated the ceaseless rotation of the days within the week and of the twenty-four

hours within each day. Our age, which has put a high price on every minute of time on the air, cannot help being painfully minute-conscious. Our forebears of the Middle Ages were conscious only of the hours, but they were so with a vengeance. They reckoned with two different kinds of hours. The hours of the clock, which are our sole concern, were not half so important to them as were the hours of the planets. Each of these was one-twelfth of the periods between sunrise and sunset and sunset and sunrise. Another name for them was "unequal hours," because their duration grew and decreased with the lengthening and shortening of the days. Only twice a year, at the equinoxes, were the planetary hours identical with the hours of the clock. They were called planetary hours because each was supposed to be ruled by one of the seven planets.

Two abbots, called Emo and Menko, of the abbey of Wittewierum in the Dutch province of Groningen, wrote in the thirteenth century a chronicle of their monastery in which, among other things, they discussed at length the influence of the planets on the hours that were assigned to them. On Monday the first hour of the twenty-four that make up a full day belonged to the Moon, the six that followed to the other planets. The eighth again was ruled by the Moon, as well as the fifteenth and the twenty-second. Each planet revolved around the earth within a sphere of its own, the moon in the one nearest the earth, Saturn in the outermost sphere.

If we start from the latter, the order of the seven planets and their concentric spheres was: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon. So the second hour of Monday belonged to Saturn, the third to Jupiter, the fourth to Mars, the fifth to the Sun, the sixth to Venus, the seventh to Mercury, and the eighth again to the Moon. Since the twenty-second, as we saw, was also ruled by the Moon, the twenty-third was again Saturn's, the

twenty-fourth Jupiter's, and the twenty-fifth, which was the first hour of the new day, was ruled by Mars. And for that reason the day that follows Monday is Mars' day, *mardi* as the French call it. The second, ninth, sixteenth, and twenty-third hours of Mars' day were ruled by the Sun, the twenty-fourth by Venus, the twenty-fifth, which begins another day, belonged to Mercury. Hence Mars' day is followed by Mercury's, called *mercredi* in French. In other words, the sequence of the days within the week is determined by the order of the planets. Each twenty-second hour was ruled by the planet that presided over the first hour of the same day, and the first hour of the next belonged to the next but two in the order of the planets. In Dutch and English the names of heathen gods have taken the place of four from Olympus: the Teuton Tiw ousted Mars, Woden Mercury, Thor Jupiter, and Freya Venus. But the sequence was not changed. By compulsion of the planets Freya's day still follows Thor's, Thor's Woden's, Woden's Tiw's. Our weekly round remains nominally a circuit through a pagan planetarium.

It was important for those who were not content to live like reasonless animals to possess this knowledge about the planets, for since these influenced all human affairs, and the phenomena of nature besides, one had to choose carefully the planet and the hour for every important undertaking. The planets did not always conform to the calculations of the trusting. In the Wittewierum chronicle occurs an account of a terrible deluge that swept away a large strip of the coast. Strange to say, remarks the annalist, the second, ninth, and sixteenth hours of that fatal Tuesday, January 16, 1219, were perfectly quiet, although subject to the Moon, which is supposed to cause sudden commotion of the sea. But the hours in between were those of the raging tempest. The pious author had no difficulty in explaining the unusual phenomenon: "The sea had forgotten

its own law, that with God's consent it might rage the more cruelly against the unsuspecting mortals."

This was of course the knowledge of the learned. It is doubtful whether the monks of Wittewierum could have explained the connection between the planets and the order of the days of the week. They were probably as ignorant of it as the common serf on the abbey lands. But they must have known that the planets had something to do with their lot on earth, for that was part of the common talk among men. They knew what it meant to be born under an unlucky star, and that the wise men who cared for the sick consulted the position of the planets so as to make sure that they chose the right moment and the right method for their treatment. Early medicine claimed to draw no small part of its efficacy from the study of the night sky, and a physician who was worth his salt had to be well grounded in astrology.

Modern rationalistic training has made it hard for us to understand the workings of the medieval mind. We are convinced that miracles do not happen, because whatever happens, be it ever so strange, can be explained as a physical phenomenon. Medieval man would agree that there are no miracles, for he believed that anything could happen. There was no limit to his credulity. He could not offer an explanation for even the simplest and commonest phenomenon of nature that any modern school child can account for; how, then, could he distinguish between the unique or exceptional occurrence and the equally inexplicable common one?

In the knowledge of astrology, the learned believed, man possessed a means whereby he could avoid, if not control, the vicissitudes of fate. But learning was the possession of only a small minority. The masses were ignorant and continued in their christianized state to believe in the efficacy of practices they

had inherited from their pagan past. Magic, incantation, and sorcery were resorted to rather than prayer; and the Church, unable to eradicate the belief in magic, gave it its sanction by encouraging the faithful to trust in the miracle-working power of the saints.

Doornik, as we saw, was the first residence of the Frankish kings. But the later rulers of the dynasty abandoned it for a residence in France. The tomb of King Childeric was forgotten and remained undiscovered until the middle of the seventeenth century. Under the reign of Charlemagne (771-814) the Dutch part of the Frankish realm received again royal recognition. Charlemagne was fond of the Low Countries and gave them his special attention. Aachen, which the French call Aix-la-Chapelle, was his favorite residence; and once rescued from their isolation, the Netherlands became an important region of his realm. They formed a link between its French and German parts, and a new culture arose there which was a harmonious blending of Germanic and Romance elements.

This made the Low Countries eminently fitted to act as intermediary between the two civilizations. There was a constant coming and going of all sorts and conditions of men: envoys, court officials, bishops, monks, scholars, merchants, minstrels. Inns were nonexistent in those days; the monasteries served as hostels where travelers from many lands met and conversed. Learning struck root in so beneficial a soil. Scholars from Italy and the British Isles were invited to come and teach Latin, prosody, and calligraphy to the monks and nuns. Monastic libraries were founded. In Liège a magnificent episcopal palace arose, adorned with stained-glass windows and paintings.

The Netherlands were also economically advanced beyond their neighbors. Europe, in those distant days, was covered with private domains that were self-sufficient little worlds whose

agriculture did not work for export, but solely for the needs of the lord and his dependents. The Frankish kings possessed many estates of that sort, which were known by the name of *villas*. They used to travel with their court retinues from one royal *villa* to another in order to live on the proceeds of the land which could not be enjoyed by them otherwise. Since the yield of their estates could not come to them, they came to the estates to consume it on the spot.

In the Low Countries, however, there was a beginning of international commerce. They were favored by their location at the mouths of three great rivers: the Scheldt, the Maas, and the Rhine. These supplied the natural channels through which the flow of trade could move.

Friesland cloth, already famous in Roman times, remained an important article of export. It was one of the principal sources of wealth, a valuable asset to the economic life of the Carolingian period. The *Lex Frisionum*, a collection of old-Frisian laws that were codified in the days of Charlemagne, contains a provision that reveals what great store was set by the undisturbed manufacture of this cloth. The amounts of *wergeld*, that is, the money due in retribution for a manslaughter or a mutilation, are minutely set forth in these laws. Not only a man's life was appraised according to his social station, but all parts of the body that were injured or lost through another's fault had their fixed prices in this tariff of compensations. A strikingly high indemnity is set for "the hands of the harpist, the goldsmith, and the woman who weaves the woollen cloth." Here is a story of primitive cultural life in a nutshell: the woman's loom producing the wealth that must pay for the luxuries of gold ornaments and the harpist's song. From these three were to evolve the forces that make a nation's life memorable: industry, art, and literature.

*Frisia non cantat*, Friesland does not sing, wrote Tacitus. That



assertion is refuted by the Frisian law's appraisal of the value of a harpist's hands. The Frisians did have singers, and one of these is known to us by name. He was called Bernlef and he lived with his wife in his blind old age at Holwerd, not far from Dokkum. He was a contemporary of those Frisians who, in the year 755, murdered St. Boniface, the Apostle of the Germans. That holy man's martyrdom has given the early Frisians a black name in the schoolbooks. But one atrocity committed by a fanatic mob does not prove that the entire nation was a tribe of savages. The assassins of St. Boniface were near neighbors of the blind singer Bernlef, of whom it is told, in the Latin *Life of St. Ludger* that he was "famous far and wide and everywhere an honored guest because he used to sing the great deeds of the old Frisians and their kings." After his conversion by Ludger, a missionary of Frisian birth, Bernlef changed his repertoire and sang to the harp Frisian translations of the psalms.

The apostle of the Frisians was Willibrord, an Angle from Northumbria, who died at a ripe old age in 739. Frisians was then the name for all the people inhabiting the northwest of the present-day Netherlands. They were pagans but not barbarians, if that term implies lack of all that graces life: arts and crafts, music, poetry. In the city of Utrecht, which grew from the small Frisian stronghold where Willibrord chose to build his cathedral, an exhibition was held in 1939 in commemoration of his death twelve hundred years before. It gave a comprehensive picture of life in the Netherlands before the year 1000. It was clear from that picture that Willibrord and his assistants and immediate successors did not live in a desolate wilderness among savages. The arts of the sculptor, the goldsmith, the scribe, the illuminator must have flourished among their converts. The Frisians to whom Willibrord brought the gospel were closely akin to his own people of Northumbria.

The Venerable Bede tells a beautiful story of how King Edwin of Northumbria, three generations before Willibrord's time, was converted with all his counselors. They had listened to Paulinus expounding Christ's gospel, when one of the counselors rose and said, "A man's life, O king, is like the flight of a sparrow across the hall, when you sit at the meal in wintertime, while the warm fire is burning on the hearth and an icy rain-storm rages outside. The sparrow flies in through one door, lingers a moment in the light and warmth of the fire, and flies out again through the other into the wintry darkness from which it came. If this new gospel tells us something definite of that darkness, then let us follow it."

That was not the voice of barbarism. Willibrord, who sprang from Edwin's people, can hardly have felt like a foreigner among the Frisians. Frisians and Northumbrians were of one race and spoke languages that came from a common stock; Willibrord's Anglian speech was probably understood by his listeners without difficulty and needed no interpretation. He understood the Frisian temper, for it resembled his own, and that undoubtedly was the secret of his success. Part of it, indeed, was due to the protection he received from the ruler of the Frankish realm. When the latter died in 714, King Radbod of the Frisians destroyed the churches that Willibrord had founded and restored the worship of his ancestors. But this was an act of revolt against Frankish supremacy, rather than proof of hostility to Willibrord's teaching. He identified Christianity with Frankish rule and struck a blow at that rule by destroying the Christian churches. But he did not oppose Willibrord for what he taught.

Not a single song of Bernlef has been preserved, unfortunately. The words and the music have left no echo. His poetry was doubtless alliterative verse such as was written in contemporary

England. But nothing comparable to the wealth of Anglo-Saxon literature exists in Frisian, nor for that matter in the Frankish speech of the Low Countries. Only in the language of the Saxons is biblical poetry in alliterative verse extant.

The Saxons long resisted all attempts at christianization. Charlemagne came to the aid of the missionaries, subjugated the heathen tribes, and compelled them to accept baptism. But Christians cannot be made by force of arms. The emperor's son and successor, Louis the Pious, employed a gentler and more effective method: he had the message of the gospel spread in the Saxons' native poetry. At his command a Saxon poet who had taken to the monastic life retold the story of the gospels in alliterative Saxon verse and sang of the *Heliand*, the Saviour, as before his conversion he must have sung of gods and heroes of the pagan past. The poem was written outside the territory now enclosed within the Dutch frontiers, but its language was not different from what was then spoken in the present-day province of Overijsel.

Such glimpses of Saxon life as this poetical account of the life of Christ in Palestine affords may safely be taken as typical of Saxon life in ninth-century Netherland. These glimpses are sometimes obtained by the poet's departure from the gospel story. He suppressed the incident that elicited from Jesus the cryptic utterance, "Let the dead bury their dead." To refuse decent burial to one's parents was a heinous act of impiety that the poet could not teach to his fellow converts as a Christian duty. Attachment of the disciples to Christ could be explained to these heathen only in that form in which they knew it to exist between men who were not blood-kin, as fidelity to the lord. How, then, could the poet, who calls the disciples "faithful heroes, noble warriors," account for their desertion of Christ when he is taken? "The prophets had long in advance foretold

that it should happen thus; hence they could not avoid forsaking him." A feeble excuse that the poet himself reluctantly offered. Peter's rashness in drawing the sword was more to his taste, and he elaborated the incident into some twenty lines to glorify his heroic onslaught upon Malchus. The *Heliand* was an attempt to recast the gospel story into the mold of Saxon life and poetry, and it is proof of uncommon skill in the poet that so hazardous an undertaking yielded an epic of literary beauty.

The dearth of poetry in the language of the Franks cannot be due to lack of literary talent among them. Franks and Anglo-Saxons were people of the same stock and they had not been exposed, so far as we know, to different foreign influences that could account for the one nation's being endowed with poetic talent and the other's being cursed with the lack of it. In the ninth century a terrible disaster befell the Netherlands which wiped out the vestiges of cultural life and civilization. For a century and a half they were ravaged by invaders from Scandinavia. A Danish raid on Friesland in 810 is the first on record; in 820 the plunderers appeared in Flanders, and from then on they returned again and again with systematic persistence. Holding the deltas of the Scheldt, the Maas, and the Rhine, the raiders undertook expeditions upstream and laid the inland regions waste, carried the inhabitants off into slavery, and left smoldering homes, famine, and death in their wake. Manor houses, churches, monasteries, episcopal palaces were destroyed, and since these were the depositories of Dutch culture, the records of it were lost to posterity.

Made helpless and dispirited by tyranny, the people lost the vigor that was needed to defend themselves against another invader, their age-old enemy the water. The great rivers, swollen in springtime by the melting snows, flooded the lowlands, and the coast line was repeatedly battered by tempestuous tides that

often broke through the natural bulwark of the dunes. The people's man-made defenses against these attacks were primitive and in need of constant watching and repair. Before the Romans taught them to build dikes, the Frisians lived on man-made mounts that rose above the water level of the highest tides. Such *terps*, as they were called, are still a characteristic feature of the Frisian landscape. From these hilltops they surveyed, in the season of the floods, their inundated pastures, involuntary islanders in a desolate waste of water.

The dikes they later learned to build gave but feeble protection to their grasslands. Old Frisian laws prescribe the manner of their construction: the tools to be used were spade, barrow, and fork. Sand and gravel reinforced with grass sods were accordingly the stock materials. To keep these feeble structures in good repair required a community of effort. But collaboration was sadly lacking. In the summer season when no danger threatened the people gave no thought to the future. A householder whose land lay close to the dike might be taught foresight by his precarious position, but his neighbors farther inland were not always willing to help him mend vulnerable spots and fill the gaps. Only unified action could guarantee safety to all, but there was no central power that could enforce such common effort. And when even isolated effort ceased in that dark century of Norman tyranny, the land became a defenseless prey of the water. It lay, fortunately, two yards higher than it does now; during the past millennium it has slowly sunk to below sea level. But even so, the damage wrought by the North Sea in alliance with the river floods was considerable. The Zuider Zee was the biggest gash that the water cut in the body of the land. A thousand years had to pass before the Dutch dared attempt to heal that scar.

The mighty empire of Charlemagne fell apart during this

period. In 843 his three grandsons divided their heritage by the Treaty of Verdun. Charles would rule in the west, in the France that was to be, Louis in the German east, and Lothair in Italy and the narrow buffer state between the realms of his brothers. But this middle realm had no permanence. It was built out of disparate parts that stretched from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. Its northern half, including the Low Countries, fell to Lothair's second son and namesake, from whom it took its name Lotharingia, better known by its French name of Lorraine. This was incorporated in 925 with the eastern realm, the German part of the old empire; and when Otto I of Germany conquered Italy, which gave him title to the imperial throne of Charlemagne, the Low Countries became automatically a part of the Holy Roman Empire. Not all of them though. In the southwest the region between the Scheldt and the sea was added to the western realm. Hence the medieval history of Belgium is the history of a part of Germany east of the Scheldt, and of a part of France west of that river. The latter came to be known by the name of Flanders, and Flanders was accordingly a fief of the French crown.

The feeble rule of the Carolingians in France favored the rise to power of the imperial *comites* or counts, who were charged by the central government with the defense and administration of the outlying provinces. As the empire grew weaker, the counts grew more independent and became hereditary lords of the lands they were supposed to rule by imperial appointment. The mightiest among these upstart dynasts of the ninth century was Baldwin the Iron, Count of Flanders. He was within his own territory a far more powerful man than was the King of France within his realm; King Charles the Bald openly admitted Baldwin's eminence by accepting him as his daughter's husband.

Thus Baldwin won for his heirs the glory of Carolingian ancestry.

In the Netherlands east and north of the Scheldt the counts were less successful than their Flemish colleague. The first German emperors were men of stronger mettle than their distant cousins of France. They appointed trusted favorites to the episcopal sees of Liège, Cambrai, and Utrecht; and these, who regarded themselves as imperial governors, maintained peace and order in their bishoprics.

It was only a surface peace. The emperor, personally unknown to his Netherlandish subjects, and wielding power through episcopal administrators who did not speak the language of the country, could not command love and loyalty, only fear. The people's loyalty was given to the native dynasties, the noble families that were the defenders of local patriotism against imperial encroachments, and these rebellious vassals were the allies and willing tools of French intrigue.

Emperor Otto II found in Geoffrey of Verdun a local dynast whom he could trust. He made him Duke of Lorraine in 1013. But Geoffrey's successors, grown powerful through imperial favors, did not regard the emperor's interests as identical with their own. They made common cause with the other Lotharingian dynasts, the counts of Louvain, Namur, Hainault, and Holland, the erstwhile enemies of Geoffrey of Verdun. Their revolt turned its fury against the Roman Church, the bulwark of the emperor's power in Lorraine. The struggle ended in the disruption of Lotharingian unity. The local dynasts set up independent governments, as the Count of Flanders had done in the west, in defiance of the emperor's authority; and the bishops, making the best of a bad bargain, abandoned their defense of the imperial interests and curried favor with the feudal lords.

It was still a primitive society over which these rulers held sway. The counties were divided into districts and in each district was a stronghold called a *burg*, that is borough, where the produce, rents, and taxes due to the count, or in episcopal territories to the bishop, were collected and stored. An official called a notary kept a record of everything that in cash or in kind was turned in. Head of the borough was the borough reeve, *burggraaf* in Dutch. His original function was solely military: he had command over the local garrison which had to protect the surrounding land against Norman raiders. As representative of the count, however, he also presided over the court of justice which at intervals convened within the borough walls. Its judges, called *schepens*, or in Latin *scabini*, seldom more than eight in number, were recruited from the surrounding countryside, for the borough itself, a rectangular fortification, had few inhabitants: the *burggraaf* with his soldiers and menials, and the clerics who officiated in the borough church. The number of buildings within the walls was limited: living quarters for the military and the clerics, a house for the *burggraaf* and another for the accommodation of the count and his retinue when he visited the borough, for, as the Carolingians used to do in earlier days, the counts in the tenth century traveled from borough to borough to live for a time on the food that was stored in its cellars and barns. The monasteries were not exempt from these visitations. As their patron and guardian the ruler had a right to their hospitality.

These boroughs, then, were not yet towns in our modern sense, but merely fortified collection centers. The bulk of the population lived in villages, survivals of the villas of Carolingian days, or on isolated farmsteads which had to be self-sustaining. The large majority of the peasants, who were freeholders before the Norman invasions, had been forced, impoverished as they



were by the raids, to sell their freeholds to neighboring noblemen or monasteries; and loss of their land involved loss of their liberty. They formed a class of semi-serfs. Only the members of the nobility and the clergy were freemen.

There were two kinds of nobles: freeborn descendants of ancient lineage, and former bondsmen who had received fiefs from their lord in reward for faithful services. As owners of fiefs they were obliged to carry arms and, mounted on horseback, called *ridders*, they were the equals of the freeborn nobles.

This rural nobility formed a restless and disturbing element in the primitive society of the tenth century. Private feuds were carried on among them when there was no war to keep them occupied. The poor peasantry was always the chief sufferer, though wars and feuds did not concern them, for those medieval wars were fought in their pastures and cultivated fields. Economic exhaustion of the opponent was, as now, the enemy's aim, and robbing him of his food supplies was the way to beat him. The slaughter of cattle and the burning of crops was the common mode of warfare, and the peasant shared in his lord's defeat by losing the fruit of his labor.

The very extremity to which society was reduced by the general lawlessness called forth, for its redress, the institution of the *Pax Dei*, the Peace of God. Each week from Wednesday evening until Monday morning the Peace of God was to prevail, and also, naturally, during the Christmas week, at Easter, and at Whitsuntide. Though it was originally a Church institution, the bishops were soon superseded by the counts as guardians of the Peace of God. These had the military power to give it sanction and to punish offenders. The *Pax Dei* became in practice the *Pax Comitatus*, the Count's Peace.

Thanks to the authority and prestige its enforcement gave to the counts, each of them was factually and legally a sovereign

ruler in his territories. The nobles in his domain were bound to him by oath to observe the Peace; at his command all private feuds must cease; wayfarers, merchants, clerics, widows, and orphans were guaranteed his special protection; and woe to the miscreants who dared to do them harm. The ruler's ability to police the county was the measure of his power; he who could satisfy the people's crying need for security won for himself the name of The Good.

The monasteries during the Norman raids had fallen into the hands of the local dynasts, who after seizing them had given them as fiefs to favored vassals. In the ninth century the abbeys resembled residences of great lords rather than refuges for cenobites. Many an abbot differed from a secular ruler only by his tonsure, and the vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity were openly broken. Monastic discipline was at its lowest ebb.

The general corruption reached such a depth that a reaction was bound to set in. A reformer arose in Gerard of Brogne, a scion of a noble house of Lorraine. On his estate of Brogne, not far from Namur, he founded a small monastery and enforced among its brotherhood the Benedictine rule in all its austerity. Pilgrims came to Brogne to see the edifying spectacle of pious monks living up to their vows. Secular and clerical lords requested Gerard to rehabilitate the houses of religion in their domains. The secular lords restored to the monasteries their former freedom, and the bishops of Liège, Cambrai, and Namur did the same. They vied with each other in founding new houses of religion.

The abbeys with the greatest fame for devotion attracted the largest gifts, and therein lay the seeds of new corruption. The houses of the "poor" Minorites possessed rich properties that were nominally the pope's. The power of the monks grew with their wealth; excessive wealth and power opened the doors of

the abbeys to luxury; luxury was corruptive of morals, and demoralization necessitated disciplinary reform. A century after the Brogne purge a new movement for monastic rehabilitation was started at Cluny; but the pious Cluny monks, in whose austere cells no prelate cared to spend the night, became known in course of time for their magnificent architecture and their excellent kitchen. Renewed decay in the twelfth century induced a fresh purge that emanated from the abbeys of Prémontré and Cîteaux in northern France. This led to the establishment of several daughter foundations in the Netherlands: Bloemhof near Wittewierum (c. 1205), Mariengarde near Hallum, and the nunneries Rozenhof and Bethlehem, all four of them in the extreme north of the Frisian country.

The lot of the serfs who belonged to monastic lands improved as the standard of morality rose among their masters. To the monks belongs the credit for having trained their serfs in the art of husbandry. The *villani* or serfs on the lands of the secular lords were worse off. These seldom took a personal interest in the lot of their dependents. In times of dearth and famine the poor on monastery lands could turn to the abbey for support, the starving on secular property received no aid and faced ruin. No wonder that there was a continuous trek of these semi-free peasants to abbey-owned territory. They placed themselves under the patronage and jurisdiction of the abbot by paying a small poll tax and promising to pay a trifling fee in case of a wedding or a death in their household. Thus they exchanged their half-freedom, as contemporary documents have it, "for a kind of serfdom which is freer than freedom."

The tenth century was an age of depravity and darkness. The chronicles of the period paint a harrowing picture of the demoralization to which the people had sunk in their serfdom. "This region," said Thietmar of Merseburg, "is justly called

the Low Countries, for justice, obedience, love of one's fellow man sink low as the sun." The monasteries were the saviors of society, not the Church, which concerned itself with administration and power politics. Its bishops lived in aristocratic luxury and had no contact with the common people. They were feared as enforcers of German discipline, and some of them were respected for their administrative skill and learning. But they were not venerated by the masses of the poor as were the monks. In them the common folk saw the true servants of God and the embodiment of the Church. They saved Netherlands culture in the tenth century from utter destruction.

## CHAPTER II

### LAND OF TOWNS

THE DUTCH people at the turn of the millennium were still earth-bound folk. The Frisian and Flemish coast dwellers gained a livelihood by fishing the North Sea and trading with English and Norwegian ports, but the others tilled the soil, of which they were as much a part as were the grass, the trees, and the cattle. They mowed the lord's grass at haymaking, they cut his trees when a house was to be built, they killed his cattle for his table and his winter provisions; and they themselves were at last mowed down by their incessant toil in the lord's service. The spot where they were born became their burial place, and of the little they owned the man who owned them, the lord of the manor, claimed the best part for himself. That was the death duty to which, according to feudal law, he was entitled. *Keurmede* was the Dutch word for it, which means "choice payment." The lord chose, and the poor fellow's heirs had to part with his choice.

Serfdom, then, implied attachment to the lord's domain. But that in itself was no hardship as long as the serf, within the bounds that contained his activities, found means to improve his condition. And that was actually possible. One must not think of the serf as necessarily a slavish, abject creature, devoid of all hope and barred from all amenities of life. The lot of the vast majority was deplorable, but misery was not the inescapable condition of serfdom.

When Charles the Good, Count of Flanders (1119-1127), planned to restore order in his country, he had an investigation made of which men belonged to his domain and which of them were his serfs and which freemen; and all those who were found to be his property he did his best to bring back into his domain. Among these serfs was a certain Bertulf, who was provost of the chapter of Bruges. This Bertulf was a man of means and, being a high church dignitary, considered himself to be next to the count in power and authority. He had many nieces whom he had married to noblemen. One of his nephews-in-law one day challenged, in the count's presence, another knight to single combat. But the challenge was disdainfully rejected because there was no equality of rank between the two, for, under the count's law, the challenged knight argued, any freeman who married a serf ceased to be free after one year of marriage and joined his lowborn wife in serfdom. Bertulf and his relatives refused to recognize the count's ownership of their persons. In loyalty to the head of their clan, according to true Germanic ethics, they banded together, plotted the death of Charles the Good, and brutally murdered him on the altar steps while he was at his prayers.

This story, which was told at great length by an eyewitness of the events that he chronicled,\* proves that serfdom was not an insurmountable bar to promotion in the Church. For those who by skill, intelligence, and energy had raised themselves above the level of their fellow serfs, the state of serfdom was a stigma merely in theory, the pain of which was felt and resented only when it provoked insult or scorn from the nobly born.

The proprietor of the domain and its serfs, as we saw, was not

\* See *"Vie de Charles-le-Bon, Comte de Flandre. Par Galbert, Syndic de Bruges. (Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France, par M. Guizot. 1825)*

always an individual. It might be a convent or monastery. There were abbeys that possessed more land than the abbot from the tower of the minster could survey in all its extent. That tower was a landmark of the abbey's environs. The rural folk regulated their lives by the tolling of its bells. These were the only clock they knew. They reminded them of the time for matins, for work, for meals, for evening prayers. They warned the people when danger threatened from fire, from raiders, from rising water. There were many such towers throughout the Low Countries. The land was dotted with them, to such an extent that the Netherlands of the eleventh century might be called a country of abbeys. They were the most striking feature of the landscape.

But in the twelfth century the general aspect of the country changed. A new type of human settlement sprang up by the side of the feudal manor and the monastery: the burgher town. It was a mushroom growth of towns that began to dot the land in such numbers that by the end of the fourteenth century they had become the chief characteristic of the Netherlands, as the abbeys had been in former days. It was a growth that needed the nourishment of running water; the most fertile spots were the banks of rivers, especially where a tributary joined them, or where they flowed into the sea.

There were, of course, towns of more ancient date, such as had grown from fortresses built by the Romans, and the later *burghs* or boroughs of Carolingian days where a military commander, as representative of the emperor's count, was charged with the defense of the surrounding land against Norman raiders and where the taxes, chiefly paid in kind, were collected and stored. The new towns did not spring from military establishments but from trading posts, for which the Dutch name was *poort*, from the Latin *portus*. The people who settled there sought profit

rather than self-protection. They needed security, of course, but not as a goal in itself. They settled where the chances for commerce and trade seemed good, and then proceeded to the reinforcement of their settlement.

This rise of towns that were trading centers first of all was symptomatic of a social revolution. Until then each manor, rural village, and farmstead had been a self-sufficient unit. Each unit lived off the land, manufactured its own tools, built what little furniture was needed, wove its own linen, and made its own clothes. The big manorial estates enclosed within their walls or palisades, in addition to the living quarters of the lord and of his retainers, a stable, a dairy farm, a kitchen and bakehouse, tool and carpenter shops, a smithy, a weaver's loom, a mill; they were isolated rural villages but they differed from modern ones in that all and everything belonged to the lord; the craftsmen were not independent workers selling the product of their labor to customers. The lord of the manor was their sole customer and he fed, maintained, and protected them in return for their labor. There was no payment in cash; no money ever passed between the lord and his serfs. These could not hope to better their lot by working harder or making better things; whatever preferment they could hope for had to come to them as a favor from their master or as a reward for taking the risk of flight.

The rise of towns meant a break with this primitive type of feudal economy. The first settlers were usually traders who came from foreign parts. They were accordingly free men, since as newcomers to a strange country they could not be any man's property. They had no doubt paid repeated visits to the Netherlands and knew the lay of the land before they settled there. Some established their trading posts under the walls of an old Carolingian borough or of an abbey or episcopal residence, others near villages or manor houses whose proximity to a river



or an ancient Roman highway made the site attractive for their venture.

The merchant's wealth was naturally not real estate, but movable property: his barge and his pack horses. The servants he employed were not serfs but free men like himself. He enjoyed the favor and protection of the counts through whose domains he traveled, for his trade was a source of revenue, as he paid tolls at bridges, fords, crossroads, and markets. Where one merchant settled and thrived others came and tried their luck; and the merchants' growing prosperity attracted handicraftsmen whose labor they needed.

The revolutionary aspect of this development was the break it caused in the closed economy of the feudal domains. The serfs who plied various handicrafts for the lord of the manor ran away and sought freedom and a chance of bettering their condition among the trading community, where they were no longer subject to the arbitrary jurisdiction of the rural lord but, like the merchants, to that of the count's representative.

The merchants in these new settlements formed from the outset a class apart. They banded together, for purposes of self-protection, in guilds or *hansas*, traveled in company to the annual fairs in other towns, and looked as a group after their common interests. The guilds levied membership fees which brought in considerable revenue, part of which was used for the building and upkeep of the town walls and for paving streets. They were under no legal obligation to do so, but by assuming these responsibilities they gained a decisive voice in the municipal administration. In many a town the guild hall became the town hall. Through their wealth they could impose their will upon their fellow burghers and challenge, in the old Carolingian boroughs, the authority of the feudal lord who used to be the borough reeve.

By their enclosure within walls the merchant settlements became territorial units distinct from the feudal society of the countryside, legal islands immune from interference by their environs. The Church did not look with favor upon this development. Commerce having its root in lust for gain was in the opinion of the Church not much better than usury, and usury was condemned by canon law as a moral evil. Towns that were dedicated to the pursuit of lucre were regarded by the clergy as dens of iniquity which did not deserve the protection of ensconcing walls. The burghers of Groningen had to promise the bishop of Utrecht in the middle of the twelfth century that they would not fortify their town; but the townspeople's need of security defied the bishop's injunction. The third generation had either forgotten their grandfathers' promise or found it impracticable to keep their word, for in the early thirteenth century the town was walled in, despite episcopal displeasure.

We possess from the hand of a monk of the early eleventh century a highly unflattering picture of the merchants of Tiel, then an important trading center in northern Brabant. "Refractory, undisciplined men," he called them, "who administer justice not according to law but to suit themselves. They claim that the emperor has allowed them to do so in writing. They forswear themselves daily, see no crime in adultery, drink heavily, and hail with roars of laughter that man as the most popular among them who, in the foulest language, incites them to guzzle wine."

That is no doubt a truthful picture. Those traders were certainly not puritans and saints. Men from different foreign parts thrown together by adventurous pursuits cannot have felt the moral restraints that they might have respected among their own kind in the home country. Drinking heavily was of old a manly sport among all the Germanic tribes, but their immoral-

ity and intemperance were not the chief targets of the monk's criticism. The gravest sin that he laid to their charge is denounced in the opening sentence: their illegal administration of justice. The charge carries its own rebuttal. It simply proves that the burghers felt the need of a new kind of justice to suit the new form of society they were creating. Its heterogeneous population called for severe authority to keep unruly elements in check. The feudal practice of trial by combat was abolished, crimes were summarily and severely punished, and since the merchants' interest demanded that civil disputes should be quickly settled, the slow-moving court procedure before the rural *schepens* or *scabini* was superseded by a special court of justice, the municipal *schepenbank*, whose members were chosen by the count from among the town's inhabitants.

Another legal innovation that aroused ecclesiastical ire was made in matrimonial law. It was of old a legal axiom that the child followed the mother's status. If a free man married a serf, the children were serfs. But the burghers would not have it so. The merchant who took a serf from the neighboring countryside to wife made her and their children his fellows in freedom. The air of the town gives freedom, was a medieval proverb. Even the runaway villain or serf from the rural plain was emancipated under town law after a year and a day's residence inside its walls.

The riots and uprisings of turbulent heretics reported in twelfth-century documents were symptoms of the friction between the urban population and the clergy still attached to the feudal past. They were not the first rumblings of the class war that was to disturb the civic peace of the communes in the fourteenth century, for all burghers took part in them, regardless of birth and social standing. In the year 1112 the diocese of Utrecht was plagued by the demagoguery of a certain Tanchelm, who

taught that the efficacy of the sacraments depended on the piety of the priests, and most priests, he added, were dissolute and corrupt. He encouraged the people not to pay tithes and denied the superiority of the clergy over the laymen. The acclaim that his fiery eloquence won wherever he went, especially among women, seems to have gone to his head. He traveled from town to town in regal attire preceded by heralds, who carried a sword and a banner aloft, and followed by twelve disciples and a woman who symbolized the Virgin Mary; and he dared boast that, if Christ was God because the Holy Ghost dwelt in him, he too was God, for he as well was possessed by the Holy Ghost.

Tanchelm seems to have shared the *Heliand* poet's pagan concept of the Saviour, as a warrior king at the head of his loyal host. His blasphemy did not make him unpopular. In Bruges he was excommunicated by the clergy and forced to leave the town, but at Antwerp, then a small town with but one parish priest, the burghers listened in raptures to his heresies and swelled the numbers of his followers to a multitude which, under the protection of three thousand armed men, struck terror into the hearts of nobility and clergy. In 1115 an infuriated priest slew the false prophet, and the storm he had raised subsided when the magic of his voice was stilled.

The secular rulers were more kindly disposed toward the autonomous upstart towns. They saw in the rapidly increasing wealth of the merchants an asset and a prop to their rule, and tried to win their loyalty by all sorts of concessions and privileges. In Flanders, the count imposed municipal restrictions on ecclesiastical jurisdiction, waived his own right to call the burghers to arms except for the purpose of repelling an invasion, and renounced his claim to market dues in favor of the town guilds.

Although the burghers within their ring of walls and moat

were jealous and proud of their isolation, they did not shun communion with the citizens of other towns within the county. That they deliberately sought each other and worked for close intercourse is clear from the uniformity of the town laws. Each town in Flanders that received a charter from the count copied its law from that of an older commune. The original model was the charter of the French-speaking town of Arras. The difference in language did not prevent the other towns of Flanders, which were nearly all Dutch, from borrowing their law from Arras.

This sharing of municipal law created a bond between the towns. The giver stood to the receiver in the relation of mother to daughter. When the *schepensbank* of a daughter town was at a loss how to pass verdict in a difficult case, it went to the *schepensbank* of the mother town for advice, a custom that made the latter, in course of time, the daughter town's court of appeal. In Brabant, the law of Louvain was the model for the other towns of that county; in the bishop of Utrecht's territory, the city of Utrecht was the mother town of all the others in his diocese; in Gelder, it was Zutphen. The towns of Holland and Zeeland derived their law from outside, Holland from Brabant, Zeeland from Flanders. The influence in social and cultural matters of Flanders and Brabant on the two northern counties was very great, and the latter's adoption of the town law of their neighbors is striking evidence of that dependence. This filial relationship between the towns of these four counties was not without importance for the future history of the Low Countries. It tended to weld them together into a political unit that became the nucleus of the Burgundian Netherlands.

The town charter was granted everywhere by the sovereign ruler of each province. Friesland was the only territory that had no overlord. It was a land of independent freeholders, among

whom the wealthiest had the standing, though not the title, of noblemen. It is not clear by whose grant the eleven towns of Friesland obtained their charter; we only know that they shared the same kind of law.

The causes of the phenomenal upswing of commerce that carried the rise of towns in its wake are obscure. The crusades to the Holy Land may have brought it about, since they opened up the trade routes to the Near East which the rise of Islam, four centuries earlier, had choked up. But William of Normandy's conquest of England was probably a more potent factor. His wife was a daughter of Count Baldwin V of Flanders; forces from Flanders had aided his expedition, and its success encouraged thousands of Flemings to cross the North Sea and settle under the Conqueror's protection. The immigrants remained in close touch with their homeland. They knew better than the English where to obtain the continental wares that the needs of a growing population called for. A steadily increasing flow of industrial products from Italy, Germany, France, and the Netherlands passed through the port of Bruges on their way to London. Also articles of luxury from Near-Eastern and Mediterranean countries were carried along in this trade. The compass, made available to skippers around the year 1200, enabled them to venture beyond the confines of the Channel and the North Sea. They sailed to Norway and the Baltic for supplies of salted fish, timber, peltry, and wheat. The expanding volume of trade necessitated the building of larger ships, and, thus equipped with ampler tonnage, they became the principal freight carriers all along the coasts of western Europe. They knew, like Chaucer's shipman, "all the havens from Gotland to Finisterre, and every creek in Brittany and Spain." Freight carrying was chiefly the business of skippers from Holland and

Zeeland. The Flemings were the capitalists who directed and financed these international trade relations.

The merchants' need of money for their expanding trade and new enterprises attracted moneylenders who represented banks in Florence, Genoa, Siena, and other Italian cities. These Lombards, as they were called, settled in nearly every town of the Netherlands that had a stake in international commerce. They became so firmly established that the name Lombard or Lommerd became established as well in the Dutch language, in which it has survived as an appellation for a municipal pawnshop.

The earliest record of Italians trading in Flanders is of the year 1128, when a number of Italians attended the fair at Ypres. From then on they were regular customers, and several were not customers only but active participants in the administration of the county as keepers of the count's seal, as masters of his mint, as his counselors and ambassadors. The Florentine Conte Gualterotti became a lifelong resident of Ghent, where he acted as one of the city collectors from 1314-19; and a few years later Count Louis de Nevers appointed him Collector of Flanders. His was not an exceptional case, for the Lombards were known throughout Europe as past masters of finance, and the Flemish counts were accustomed to entrusting the financial administration of Flanders to one of these foreign wizards. Conte — that was the name by which he was known in Ghent — combined with his many other offices the profession of innkeeper. As a moneylender, not only to merchants but also to the count and other princes and noblemen, he was visited by many customers of high rank; and clever businessman that he was, he directed them to his hostelry where he could charge them for their bed and board rather than entertain them at home at his own cost.

An anonymous schoolmaster of Bruges, who taught there in the thirties of the fourteenth century, has left us an enchanting picture of his town in a French-Flemish phrase book. In this *Livre de Mestiers* we hear the burghers converse and bargain, quarrel and backbite, brag of their riches, complain of their troubles, comfort the sick, condole with the stricken, cheer the poor. The text, which is arranged in parallel columns, reflects the bilingualism of medieval Bruges. The native speech was Flemish, but it was fashionable among the patricians to possess a ready command of French, since that was the language of the court. Foreigners who settled among them did well to learn both, and the schoolmaster's manual may have proved useful to grown-up aliens no less than to his little pupils. A list of the various countries they came from is contained in the phrase book: "Oliver, the innkeeper, has many fine guests, for he has the Germans who are called Easterlings, the Spaniards, and the Scots; but he cannot have the Lombards, nor the Flemings, nor the French, nor those from Brabant, Zeeland, Holland, Genoa, England, Hainaut, Friesland, Normandy, Lucca, Florence, and Denmark." The master fails to explain why Oliver's custom is limited to Germans from the Baltic coast, Spaniards, and Scots. There evidently was another inn that was patronized by all the others, but the *Livre des Mestiers* does not mention its owner's name.

The cleavage in the citizenry, of which bilingualism was the audible symptom, divided it horizontally into an upper and a lower class. The merchants, in the course of the thirteenth century, had become a proud and exclusive patriciate, many of whom abandoned commerce to live on their real-estate investments and run the city administration. They owned nearly all the land within the walls and governed the town as if it were their private property. Had they not built it, were not its fortifi-



cations due to their initiative, would there be a paved street anywhere but for them, were not its churches monuments to their generosity? They had reason to be proud and feel a proprietary right in their creation. The records refer to them as the *majores* or the *boni*, the aristocrats.

But the commonalty had another name for them: to them they were the Loafers. The arrogance of the Loafers fed on their wealth, civil unrest on their arrogance, and fear of riot and revolt turned the rulers into tyrants. They even brooked with ill-concealed annoyance all meddling by the count in town affairs, and often dared to challenge his authority. Priests and mendicants who evangelized among the masses and tried to pacify them by teaching Christian humility and resignation unwittingly fanned the fire of insurrection, for the poor, being taught to condemn riches, only learned to condemn the rich. The general discontent culminated in 1280 in a labor uprising that spread from Bruges to all the industrial towns of Flanders. Even the better-class citizens, who resented their exclusion from guild and government office, made common cause with the rioters.

Count Gui of Dampierre, seeing his chance for getting even with the arrogant oligarchy, intervened with the intent of curtailing the municipal autonomy. But he did not step into the fray as labor's ally. That which the workers wanted was not less autonomy for their city but a share for themselves in its government. The town's underdogs barked up the wrong tree from the count's point of view; but scenting his enmity against the aristocrats, they let him take them in leash.

The oligarchs, in fear of being brought to bay, turned for aid to the King of France. There was no trace of treason in this action, for Flanders was a fief of the French crown and since the oligarchs were threatened by their count, who was a vassal of the king, they appealed from their immediate sovereign to

their ultimate overlord. No feudalist could see anything reprehensible in that. But there is irony in this resort to feudalism by the descendants of merchants who, in their autonomous, walled-in towns, had deliberately broken away from the feudal past.

Count Gui de Dampierre's disloyalty to his liege lord won him the affection of the urban proletariat, but lost for him his county and his freedom. He sought to escape from encirclement by France in an alliance with England. But the military aid he received from King Edward I did not amount to much. By the end of the thirteenth century Flanders had been reduced to a mere province of the French realm and Count Gui was a prisoner in Paris. In May, 1301, King Philip IV, accompanied by his queen, appeared in person among his Flemish subjects. The patrician rulers of Ghent and Bruges regaled him sumptuously at the expense of the taxpayers; and everywhere the Flemish lion was chased from banners and escutcheons and replaced by the lily of France.

The masses felt this reception of their majesties as a national humiliation. From that year on their resistance against the tyrannous city rulers received fresh strength from a new passion: patriotic fervor fanned the smoldering fire of social and economic discontent. Hatred of the plutocrats was reinforced by hatred of the foreigners from France. The people saw in the lily a badge of shame and gave the patrician allies of France the contemptuous nickname of *Leliaerts*, lily men, and by way of warning that the lion of the Flemish escutcheon would raise his claw against them they chose for themselves the name of *Clauwaerts*.

The claw men's threat was not an empty boast. In 1302 the Flemish people, first those of Bruges, rose up in revolt and massacred without mercy the king's officers, the Francophile patricians, and all who could not speak Flemish or spoke it

with a French accent. A French army promptly descended upon Flanders to restore order. But the Flemings this time were a match for the French. Captained by the sons of Count Gui they dealt a crushing blow to the enemy in the so-called battle of the golden spurs, not far from the town of Kortrijk. No prisoners were taken, no quarter was given, no ransom accepted by the ill-mannered burghers. To the knights of France war was a noble sport, to the citizens of Flanders it was bloody earnest. The French players were accustomed to taking, and to being taken, prisoner, for a dead knight had no value, a live prisoner paid ransom. But the Flemings cared neither for the sport nor for the money. They fought with fury and killed without mercy. Panic seized the ranks of the enemy, and the flower of French chivalry perished ignominiously, like slaughtered cattle, on Flanders field. Those who survived and, weak with hunger and fear, managed to reach the gates of Doornik, offered to sell their armor for a loaf of bread.

The defeat of knighthood in armor at the hands of rabble untrained for war defied credibility and could be explained only as a triumph of treachery. Improbable stories of traps into which the French were inveigled were invented and circulated among the king's subjects. But modern research has disposed of those legends as pure fiction. The trap the French nobility ran into was their own self-assurance, which made them charge headlong across a terrain cut by ditches, before the hailstorm from the French crossbows could have shaken the array of the embattled Flemings. The mounts that did not flounder in the ditches were caught on the pikes of an immovable barrier of burghers, and the field became a shambles of horses, trampling and trampled upon, and of men in the agony of death.

The victorious coalition of the house of Dampierre and the urban democracy did not outlast the peace that was signed three

years later. It was not a treaty between the king and the burghers. Count Robert de Béthune swore anew allegiance to the King of France and bound his Flemish subjects to pay a heavy tribute by way of penalty for their disloyalty, as though the king and not they had been victorious.

Count Robert, like his father, wanted to curtail urban autonomy; and now that the town democracy had won the upper hand over the patrician families, he saw in its ascendancy to power a threat to his authority over the city. And not only Count Robert viewed the future with alarm. The democratic victory at Kortrijk was a challenge to all the neighboring rulers: the Duke of Brabant, the Count of Holland, the bishops of Liège and Utrecht. They dreaded its contagious effect upon the rural population, the disinherited on the feudal domains. An uprising of the peasantry of Flanders proved that their fear was not unfounded. When harvest time approached in the year 1323, the peasants refused to pay tithes and demanded that the crops reaped for the monasteries be distributed among the poor. The yield of the soil that they tilled belonged to them, they claimed, not to the rich owners who lived in idleness and luxury. Their leader, Nicholas Zannekin, was a resident of the extramural territory of Bruges, and there is reason to suspect that the revolt was supported, if not instigated, from inside the city walls. The castles of the nobility were pillaged and those who fell into the hands of the plunderers were massacred with appalling cruelty. A contemporary ballad voices the hatred that the aristocracy felt for the churlish brutes:

*Let us sing of the churls! Their hordes  
Would make the devil afear'd.  
They would subdue the lords.  
They wear an unkempt beard.  
Their ragged clothes are fit for a sty,*

*Their hats too small for their heads.  
Their hoods are all awry.  
Their hose and shoes are worn to shreds.  
With bread and cheese, curd and gruel,  
They all day stuff their guts.  
That makes the churl such a fool  
He never eats but gluts.*

*We'll teach them to be civil,  
Chasing them over the moors.  
They scheme nothing but evil.  
I know where to send such boors.  
We'll drag and swing them high  
And give their beards a shave.  
The fellows can't get by.  
Only force can make them behave.  
With bread and cheese etc.*

The poet's threat was a prophecy. In 1328 a French army defeated Zannekin's forces near Kassel, and the victors took bloody vengeance on the churls. Bruges and Ypres, which had aided the rebels, were dismantled and heavily fined; and Ghent, which had remained loyal to the count, found its reward in predominance over its defenseless rivals.

Louis de Nevers, Count of Flanders, who had succeeded his grandfather, Robert de Béthune, in 1322, repaid the king for his aid at Kassel with unswerving loyalty. When war broke out between France and England — the war that was to last a hundred years — Louis did not hesitate a moment but chose to side with his sovereign, regardless of the consequences for the commercial interests of Flanders. He had the English merchants in his county arrested, a war measure that was immediately countered by Edward III with a prohibition of the export of English wool to Flanders. The Flemish cloth industry could not

survive without it. The urban masses of unemployed workers turned from their looms to beggary, and the rich who saw themselves threatened with financial ruin were for once in accord with the poor in cursing the count whose policy was the cause of their distress. Shared misery made for internal peace.

In Ghent the patricians made common cause with the weavers, whose attempts at revolt they used to quell so mercilessly. Early in 1338 they agreed to set up a revolutionary government of five headmen or captains and three deacons, one representing the weavers, another the fullers, and the third the smaller crafts.

Three of the five headmen came from the ranks of the patriciate, and one of these was Jacob van Artevelde, who soon emerged as the unrivaled leader of the city. Though he belonged to the privileged class, he came to power as the spokesman not only of that class but of the rank and file of the burghers. The Flemish people stood behind him as a man, and Count Louis, dreading the loss of his honor as a vassal even more than the loss of his county, fled like an outcast to Paris. Van Artevelde entered into negotiations with King Edward and obtained the repeal of the interdict on wool; he persuaded the king to press his claim to the French crown; he arranged the ceremony at Ghent in which Edward assumed the title of King of France; and as the leader of the Flemish democracy he made Flanders King Edward's ally. A crushing victory by the English fleet over the French at Sluis convinced his people that the English alliance was a master stroke on Artevelde's part. Flemish self-rule seemed secure in the future from French interference. And Van Artevelde was revered throughout the county like a god.

But this idolatry was not proof against the disillusion of setbacks and failures. When the leader was found to be fallible, his greatness shrank in the people's estimation. Van Artevelde's policy suffered reverses. Edward III withdrew from the Con-

continent without refunding the subsidies that he had borrowed in Flanders; and the people's hero, in whose worship they had been united, could not hold them together when the worship ceased. Old enmities and feuds broke out anew and shattered the internal peace that Flanders needed in the face of external danger. Ypres and Bruges, the dismantled rivals of Ghent, were jealous of the latter's supremacy. The rural population rebelled against the prohibition of looms outside the municipal walls, the weavers' and fullers' guilds were at odds in Van Artevelde's own city. The leader who had earned the blessings of his people for his initial successes could not escape their curses in the hour of defeat. One day in 1345 a mob of weavers broke into his home and the deacon of their guild slew him with the stroke of an axe.

His meteoric rise and sudden fall dazzle the imagination. The fourteenth-century chronicler of contemporary events, Jean Froissart, was fascinated by the career of this burgher who dealt with kings as their equal and dared defy the Count of Flanders and the count's liege lord, the King of France. It is through the eyes of this artist of the pen that posterity sees him, and sees him, no doubt, idealized. But Froissart would not have painted this fanciful picture if the model had not been a man of uncommon stature. The legendary Van Artevelde he portrayed was the creation of the general awe that the real man's greatness inspired. There is no more imposing figure in the medieval history of the Netherlands.

This brief account of events in Flanders is an epitome of the growth of democracy in all the Low Countries. Each county had its perils and problems that sprang from peculiar local conditions, but the main trend was the same in Brabant, Zeeland, Holland, and Utrecht. In the tug of war between the towns and their sovereign prince the victory was often in the balance,

but in the long run the urban republics lost out through inner weakness. The underpaid workers hated the city rulers, and when they had finally won a share in the municipal government the craft guilds, outbidding each other for political power, fell out among themselves. Their jealousies turned many a market place into a bloody battlefield, for passions ran high and political argument was usually driven home with fists and staves. Out-voted minorities would not submit to the will of the others, and if they found an energetic spokesman to act as their leader, civil war ensued. Since each city was a law to itself and jealous of its independence, there was rivalry rather than collaboration between neighboring towns. And the sovereign who knew how to divide and rule was the gainer.

In the early fifteenth century a prince came to power who understood that subtle art to perfection. He was a foreigner who was not prompted by any love of the Low Countries. He was Duke of Burgundy, a dynasty that was an offshoot of the royal house of France. By inheritance, marriage, intrigue, and force he gathered in his grasp a large part of the Low Countries: Flanders, Brabant, Limburg, Holland, Zeeland, Hainaut. Although a native of France and a scion of the royal house, he allied himself with England against his mother country, for his ambition was to build up a powerful state wedged in between France and Germany, a reconstruction of that large fragment of the erstwhile Carolingian empire that had borne the name of Lower Lotharingia. That dream could not be realized as long as the Netherlands remained a crazy-quilt of principalities each jealous of its autonomy and harboring within its borders industrial towns no less jealous of theirs. Philip of Burgundy and his son Charles after him were determined to weld that political diversity into a nation. They established the beginnings of a centralized administration, installed a central



chamber of accounts, a central court of last resort, convoked an assembly of delegates from the nobility, the clergy, and the towns of all the Low Countries under their authority, the States General so-called, and organized a federal army of mercenaries.

There was resistance against these encroachments upon vested local rights and privileges. But it was spasmodic and unorganized and consequently ineffective. The nobles, never capable of concerted action, lacked the power to oppose the duke successfully. The heyday of chivalry was over. They still enjoyed the glamour of their high estate but not the power that used to go with it. Since money had come into circulation, the feudal lords were accustomed to accepting payment in cash from their tenants rather than in services and products. The amount of money they received in exchange for services no longer rendered was fixed by contract for once and all, so that not they but their tenants profited by the progressive rise of prices of farmlands, wages, and crops. As a result the feudal lords began to see their revenues dwindle; they borrowed money from bankers and merchants, or gambled in town to recuperate their lost fortunes; or made a living as robber barons; and towns banded together to raze their castles and put an end to their depredations. Noble estates, put up as security, were lost to the creditors and passed into the hands of wealthy burghers. The destitute nobles would not meekly submit to their financial ruin. The slightest disturbance of the peace was a windfall to them; they were always ready to join one or the other of the factions and wreak vengeance upon some cursed town under pretext of serving their party's cause. The county of Holland was for almost a century in the throes of civil war which had its origin in a question of succession; the cause was but a welcome excuse for a moribund feudalism to get even with the money aristocracy of the towns.

Philip of Burgundy had easy fishing in such troubled waters.

He favored the party that was financially the stronger one. The burgher rulers were his allies and their wealth the cornerstone of his administration. He laid the foundations for a federalized Netherlands which, divorced since 1477 from the duchy of Burgundy, came to embrace practically all the territory now enclosed within the borders of Holland and Belgium. The federation, a Burgundian State without Burgundy, held great promise for the future. But it was not destined to outlast the sixteenth century.

### CHAPTER III

#### PAINTERS, PLAYERS, AND PREACHERS

THAT THE Dukes of Burgundy were foreigners was nothing against them in the eyes of their Dutch subjects. Nationalistic feelings, as we saw, could be aroused by hatred against an alien invader. Flemish patriotism was in its early symptoms a form of Francophobia. It was a negative feeling that in wartime bound citizens of Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres together; they were as one in hatred of the French, but they did not feel a love of Flanders that in times of peace united them as citizens of a Flemish nation.

Philip of Burgundy was not hated by the Flemings because of his French birth. His grandfather had married a daughter of the Count of Flanders and as their heir he had a right to the succession. As the people's legitimate ruler he commanded their loyalty and their affection. Love of the reigning dynast was a more unifying force, in those days, than love of country. The person of the prince was a living reality, the nation was an intellectual concept of which the people were not yet capable.

A striking example of the strength of that love for the person of the ruler can be found in a story that is told by Georges Chastellain, the great chronicler of Philip's reign. "In 1462 the duke was seized with a serious illness that took an alarming turn for the worse. His son, Duke Charles, had greater faith in the efficacy of the people's prayers than in the art of the medical profession. He sent messengers to all the towns to summon the

burghers to prayers and processions. In Abbeville the messenger arrived late at night when most of the inhabitants had gone to bed. The gate was opened for him, he delivered his message to the magistrate, and the latter immediately ordered the bells of St. Wolfram's church to be tolled. Everyone awoke in terror. They crowded into the church or the town hall, and there they were told the reason of the alarm and the contents of the letter from the young duke. They broke out in loud clamor and crying and clapping of hands for compassion and, determining to give themselves over to nightlong supplication for their prince in peril of his life, all went to the great church of St. Offran. There they lighted blazing candles and went on their knees in tears, many lying prostrate, and the bells tolled all through the night. And they did not cease praying, crying, and moaning until it was full daylight; and in the morning they held a procession, attended mass, and listened to sermons."

Devotion to the reigning prince, their common sovereign, did not give the people of Burgundy, Brabant, Flanders, Hainaut, Holland, and Zeeland the feeling that their diversity constituted a nation. There was so little semblance of national cohesion that there was not even a name for their union. The Burgundian officials in the Low Countries referred to them in official documents as *les pays de par deçà*, the lands over here, and this phrase passed from the legal documents into the speech of everyday. It was not a name, however, that could be turned into a battle cry and arouse patriotic passions. The name Netherlands was a rare designation in the fifteenth century and those who used it occasionally did not feel it to be a proper name. It was a descriptive one such as its synonym "the low countries" and "*les pays de par deçà*." There was no proper name for the Burgundian nation for the simple reason that a Burgundian nation did not exist. The word fatherland (*vaderlant*) was

known in the Middle Ages, but it was used exclusively of the home of the heavenly father. In Latin documents of the period *patria* does occur in reference to an earthly dominion, but it was a name for the parts, not for the whole: the counties and duchies under the rule of the dukes were so many *patriae* of local patriots.

In the federal government and at the ducal court natives of Burgundy and Wallonia played a more important role than those of the Dutch-speaking territories, although Burgundy could not compete in economic and political power with Flanders, Brabant, Holland, and Zeeland. The splendor of Philip's reign was due to the wealth he obtained from his Dutch-speaking lands. Duke Philip had learned to speak Dutch, but French was the language of his court. The age of chivalry was over and the wealthy burghers of Flanders had become the rivals in wealth and power of the landed nobility; yet more than a century after the battle of Kortrijk, Chastellain, the court historian of Philip the Good, still adhered to the traditional concept of human society as a God-ordained division of labor between knight, monk, and peasant. The peasant, he wrote, must till the land for knight and monk, the monk must by his prayers save knight and peasant from hell, the knight must protect monk and peasant against all evil. There is no mention of the burgher in this time-honored view of the social hierarchy. The world had greatly altered since that view was conceived, but social theory had not yet caught up with the change. The "Song of the Churls" was realistic evidence that the knight as protector of the peasant was a romantic fiction, but the traditionalism of court life was proof against disillusion. Besides, Chastellain was enamored of romance and found delight in the costly pageant of the court, which the burgher prosperity of the Netherlands made possible.

In 1430, Duke Philip married Isabella of Portugal and used the occasion for an extravagant display of his wealth. The banquet was enlivened by all sorts of side shows and the tables groaned under a superabundance of costly dishes. There was amongst others a huge pie out of which jumped a ram with gilded horns and fleece dyed blue, together with a dancer in the skin of some wild beast. Two fountains spouted wine without ceasing for the delectation of the common crowd. The aristocracy were treated to dances and jousts. All the knights, esquires, counselors, officers, and servants of the duke were clothed that day in mantles of blue damask or satin presented to them by their lord and master.

It was on this festive occasion that Duke Philip announced his plan to institute a new order of knighthood, the Order of the Golden Fleece. It was to bind the highest nobility of his lands together into a mystic brotherhood. The golden fleece worn on a chain around the neck was the badge of membership. To be included was the highest honor any nobleman of his realm could attain; and the knights of the Golden Fleece, like modern Argonauts, were to follow their Jason of Burgundy on a new crusade to the Holy Land that would test to the utmost their virtue, courage, and loyalty. Of the twenty-four first knights of the order only one came from Dutch Flanders; all the others came from French-speaking territories: French Flanders, Artois, Picardy, Hainaut, and Burgundy. Yet the place where the duke chose to hold the ceremony that made the fleece a symbol of chivalry was the city of Bruges, where the vulgar processing of woollen fleeces created the wealth that made such extravagance possible.

The glory of those noble knights has long since faded; their names and titles figure in history books, but little else is left of their magnificence. The glory of Duke Philip's reign is peren-

nial only in the works of men who were common burghers of the Netherlands, the painter Jan van Eyck, the sculptor Claus Sluter, and other artists of the brush and the chisel.

In court documents Jan van Eyck is referred to as *varlet de chambre*, which does not mean that he was employed as a valet of the duke's bedroom. It was a designation that assigned to him a rank in the court hierarchy that was open to burghers who plied an artistic handicraft. A burgher at court, however distinguished an artist, could not consider himself the social equal of titled nobility. Art did not command the profound respect that it enjoys in modern times. The painter and the sculptor were classed with the handicraftsman, and were often expected to turn their skill to jobs that a modern would consider beneath him. I have no doubt that Van Eyck designed armorial bearings, decorated banners and the sumptuous campaign tents of Duke Philip. But it does not follow that he was not given due honor or that he was treated with small respect. The duke employed him on diplomatic missions and sent him to Portugal in 1428 to paint two portraits of the Princess Isabella before he decided to beg for her hand. And when the artist married and settled in Bruges, the duke stood sponsor at the christening of his baby daughter.

On his pictures he signed himself Johannes de Eyck, but his contemporaries spoke of him as Master Johannes, and the name Van Eyck was forgotten by the next generation. Albrecht Dürer, who lived a century later, knew him only as Meister Johannes. Family names were rare in those days, and those who possessed one were never called by it alone.

Van Eyck's art sprang from the craft of miniature painting. He himself was a master limner or illuminer. A precious manuscript in the library of Turin, that perished in a fire forty-five years ago, contained specimens of his skill so surpassingly beautiful that no one else than Johannes could have painted them,

unless it were his older brother Hubert, over whose life and work a cruel fate has thrown a veil of mystery. Here were three landscapes that showed this genre not in an initial stage but in perfection. Here was not merely realistic transcription of scenery such as Van Eyck's contemporaries Pol van Limborch and his brothers achieved with great skill in the book of hours they illuminated for the Duc du Berry; here was a new vision of nature's beauty, the evocation of distance, the illusion of immensity, and a sense of figures moving in atmosphere and space. These miniatures are the first landscape paintings known to the art historian. If their maker had actually no precursors in this genre, he was an originator of astounding genius.

The brothers Van Eyck are said to have been the first to use oil as a painting medium. But oil was in use before their time. Their merit was in improving the manner of its application, which created a brilliant surface whose colors have retained their full values undimmed to the present day.

Rich burghers followed the example of the court and vied with the duke in patronizing art. Skilled painters found ready employment in the prosperous cities of Flanders and Brabant; Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp, Brussels, Louvain became centers of artistic activity which attracted apprentices and masters from elsewhere. Roger van der Weyden, painter of portraits and elegiac altarpieces, was the foremost master of the Brussels guild; Hans Memling, exquisite technician who carried all he did to perfection, was a German immigrant who made Bruges his home; Dirc Bouts, painstaking and matter-of-fact observer of life, came from Haarlem in North Holland and settled in Louvain; Hugo van der Goes, imaginative dramatizer of reality, was a native and resident of Ghent.

Realistic portrayal of life is the most striking feature of this early art of the Netherlands. The lifelike portrait is its triumph.



Before the fifteenth century the attempt to render the human face produced not a portrait of an individual but the picture of a type, recognizable only as a king, a duke, a banker, a goldsmith by the attributes of his rank or calling. Van Eyck painted likenesses, not representatives of social classes. Contemporaries who knew the models could have identified them by name.

This interest in the individual was something new. Medieval man was aware of himself as a member of a group, as a minor part of a larger whole. Everybody belonged, none stood alone. The concept of man being a little world in himself was only just beginning to dawn upon the minds of the thoughtful, and this novel sense of isolation and uniqueness found expression in literature and art. The self became an object of observation and study. Chaucer, a generation before Van Eyck, drew a picture of himself in the *Canterbury Tales*, and in Van Eyck's magnificent painting, now in the London National Gallery, of Arnolfini and his wife in the intimacy of their home, one sees in the concave mirror on the wall in the background a reflection of the artist entering the room. It must be he, for under the mirror he painted the inscription *Johannes de Eyck fuit hic*, Johannes van Eyck was here. Dirc Bouts stands limned full length in his masterpiece at Louvain, a scene of the Last Supper in a charming Dutch interior of the period, which he painted in the sixties for the Confraternity of the Holy Sacrament.

There are few faces among these fifteenth-century portraits that will haunt us by their beauty. They haunt us by the merciless rendering of their asperity. Van Eyck must have been fond of Arnolfini, but there is nothing lovable in this long-nosed face with its shifty eyes. Conway sees in him "a sharp man of business, jesuitical, mean, sly, and self-satisfied; the Lord deliver us from being caught as debtors to the like of him." The long nose is an equally characteristic feature of Philip the Good's ugly

face and Chancellor Rolin's no less repellent mask. There is not a trace of tenderness in them; and one wonders what Van Eyck thought of them who thus mercilessly showed them up in all their frosty pride and hardheartedness.

Pictorial art speaks a universal language; though the artist's native language was Dutch, he could speak to foreigner and countryman alike with the brush. Literature is limited in its appeal. The Dutch language was not spoken at court, and Dutch poets found no patron in Duke Philip the Good. It was a Fleming who wrote the history of his reign, but he wrote it not in his native Dutch but in French. Dutch was, like Cinderella, good enough for the kitchen but unworthy to mingle with the great at court. Georges Chastellain was well aware of that prejudice, and as if to propitiate his courtly readers by anticipating their censure of his rusticity, he ran himself down with mock humility as "a Flemish man, a man of the cattle-breeding marshes, rude, ignorant, stammering of tongue, greasy of mouth and palate and quite bemired with other defects proper to the nature of the land."

As a result, the same period that owes its magnificence and perennial glory to the plastic arts of skilled Netherlanders produced no literature in their language that can compare with the work of their hands. The cultured among the Dutch spoke French and the cult of the vernacular was left to middle-class burghers among whom the gifts of invention and poetry were rare. For lack of imaginative subject matter they turned the poetry of earlier days into prose, a practice that was encouraged by the invention of printing, for while poetry must be listened to, prose can be read, and the number of readers rapidly increased when books could be multiplied in large quantities.

In the thirteenth century, verse was practically the only medium of literary expression; even chronicles and treatises on

natural history and medicine were turned out in rhyming octosyllabic couplets, the same meter that was employed in the romances of chivalry. Two centuries later the practice was reversed and works of fiction were retold in prose and won fresh popularity by being distributed as printed chapbooks.

The masterpiece of thirteenth-century literature, the beast epic of Reynard the Fox, was thus resuscitated and popularized. The region of its early vogue was limited to the borderland between Romance and German cultures. The names of the beasts reflect that bilingual origin: Reynard the fox, Isengrim the wolf, Grimbert the badger, Bruin the bear are unmistakably Dutch; Noble the lion, Coward the hare, Beline the ram, Chanticleer the rooster were christened on the French side of the border. It does not seem likely that popular parlance invented those names; they were probably coined by learned monks who were the first to turn the beasts into mock-epic heroes.

The earliest of these monastic epics in Latin was written in the tenth century in the monastery of Toul in Lorraine. It contains prominent features of the story that three centuries later was told in Flemish by a poet of whom we know nothing except that his name was Willem. The beasts in that Latin poem are still the anonymous abstractions of the ancient fables. They have not yet received a distinct individuality by being endowed with proper names. These seem to have come into literary use in the course of the twelfth century. They were doubtless inventions of the monks, but did not gain wide currency until secular poets, after 1150, began to tell wolf and fox stories in the vernacular.

French poets took the lead. Their tales, called branches of the *Roman de Renard*, a term employed by the poets themselves, were of differing value. One of the best was the branch that Willem chose for his model. He handled the borrowed material

so deftly and with so much freedom and originality that his adaptation is universally conceded to be the best specimen of the genre in any language.

The many imitations to which it gave rise is proof of its enduring popularity. It was translated into Latin verse by a contemporary of Willem's. An anonymous poet of the fourteenth century composed a sequel to it, expanding it to a poem of nearly eight thousand lines, which he entitled *Reynard's Story*. This text, in a printed edition of 1487, gave the story currency far beyond the borders of the Low Countries: it was translated into Low German, and from Low German again into High German, Danish, Swedish, English, Icelandic, Latin, and finally was retold in German hexameters by no less a poet than Goethe.

The common people shared Goethe's love of Reynard's story, but they liked it best in the homely garb of a chapbook in prose. This appeared for the first time in 1479, and it was in this disguise that the continental beast epic first crossed the Channel. William Caxton, who was in business for thirty-three years in Bruges, brought a copy back with him from the Netherlands and printed his English translation on his press at Westminster in the year 1481.

To the fox belongs the credit for the widespread vogue of the beast epic. When vernacular poets took it over from the monastic Latinists, the fox replaced the wolf as the chief villain of the plot. His villainy had something engaging that was lacking in the wolf's. Isengrim could never have gained the popular applause with which Reynard was received. The little creature that could outwit the wolf, the bear, and the lion and found safety from their wrath in his resourcefulness appealed to the Dutch burghers who resented the arrogance of the nobility. His physical weakness was his strength, for it was through their

utter contempt for feeble Reynard that the bear and the wolf were easily lured into danger. They were caught in the trap of his defenselessness.

Willem's poem gave ample scope to a burlesque portrayal of human life and parodied with subtle humor the aristocratic romance of chivalry. Its literary satire eludes the modern reader, but its social implications are as clear and enjoyable today as they were in Willem's time. Reynard is a creator of high and low comedy. Impudence, mendacity, sly wit, flattery, sarcasm are the weapons on which he relies, and he knows intuitively which of these will serve him best in each situation. The poet had a sneaking love for his foxy hero and felt no qualms of conscience in recounting his repeated escapes from the punishment which from an ethical point of view he fully deserved.

There runs a strain of tragedy through this highly comic story. Reynard, the outlaw, is a lonely fellow. He is set upon by all the world, and the only place where, as the story ends, he finds security for himself and his family is a bleak wilderness that is shunned by all other beasts. The life he leads is not of his own choosing. It is his destiny so to live. He must act the villain's part that an inscrutable fate has assigned to him in the mystery play of life, and his claim to pardon is that he plays it to perfection.

Pleasure in the portrayal of the externals of life, which we found to be a striking characteristic of Van Eyck and his followers, is typical of the Netherlander's attitude toward the world in which he moves and has his being. Dutchmen are inveterate realists, people who live by sight rather than insight. That was especially true of the Dutch of the fifteenth century. It was an age devoid of thought, and its reveling in the visible beauties of the world was a compensation for intellectual poverty.

The Church, indeed, did its best to make the people familiar with abstract notions, but these remained mere names of ideas that did not appeal to them unless they were transformed into visible entities. The allegories in which painters and sculptors presented the teachings of the Church were an alluring but ineffective substitute for verbal instruction. The eyes took them in, but what they saw did not impress the intellect. Van Eyck's great altarpiece, the "Adoration of the Lamb" at Ghent, drew admiring crowds since it was set up in 1432, but few among them could fathom or cared to fathom its mystical meaning. Only the stage, where visible representation and verbal expression were combined possessed the means of engaging both the greedy eye and the listless mind. It made a compromise with the mind's languor by not demanding from it any effort of thought about abstract concepts; it found its way to the mind through the eye by presenting all abstractions in visible shape. All ideas were embodied in the *dramatis personae*; the cardinal virtues and the seven deadly sins accompanied the virtuous and the sinful in human shapes upon the stage and made by act and speech their inner conflicts visible and audible.

Such allegorical stage plays were called moralities, a name that seems to guarantee that they did not miss their intended effect. Their didacticism, unenlivened by much dramatic action, would bore us moderns to death; but fifteenth-century audiences were not critical and relished any show that took them away from the drabness of everyday routines. There is one morality play, though, that makes a deep impression even on a modern audience. Its leading character is a personage whom the author called *Elckerlijc*, that is Everyman; it is an allegory of man in the abstract; the other *dramatis personae* are Fellowship, Kinship, Property, Good Works, Contrition, Confession, Wisdom, Strength, Beauty, The Five Senses, and two far greater ones

whose appearance in the opening scene sets the play into motion and gives it perennial significance: God the Father and Death.

The play opens, in imitation perhaps of the Book of Job, with a scene in heaven. God is heard, and was seen on the stage maybe, lamenting the depravity of His creatures on earth, who adore riches rather than Him who died for their sake. He calls for Death and commands him to go down to earth and summon Everyman before God's judgment seat to give an accounting. Everyman, who is foppishly dressed when Death accosts him, tries to obtain a respite by offering Death a bribe, but when Death cannot be tempted, Everyman asks, "May I come back again when I have shown my reckoning?" "Nevermore." "May not someone go with me for company's sake?" "If you can find one brave enough to go with you, he certainly may."

So Everyman sets out on a quest for a willing fellow pilgrim. Fellowship is the first to be appealed to. "Don't despair," he tells Everyman, "I would go with you were it to hell." But when it dawns upon him that he is invited on a journey from which there is no return, he hastily backs out. Kinship is equally lavish with protestations of loyalty and just as unwilling to come along when he realizes what is expected from him. Then Everyman turns to Property, who answers with a sneer, "Did you think I would follow you beyond the world? I tell you flat, I won't."

Then he bethinks himself of Good Works. But Good Works is too weak to stand on his feet. "Are you so sick?" asks Everyman. "And you the cause of it. If you had satisfied my need, I would have cleared your reckoning, which now is blotted to your undoing." However, Good Works is in the mood to help him. He has a sister called Contrition. "She will guide you and show you in what frame of mind to go to this accounting." Contrition takes him to Confession. "She is pure like a mountain

rill; she will purge you." Through Confession, Good Works is restored to health. Good Works gives Everyman the robe of Remorse to wear and orders Wisdom, Strength, Beauty, and The Five Senses to stay by Everyman and give him advice and support. In their presence he makes his last will and testament, bequeathing half his goods to the poor and the other half to the place where it is due to go. Then Contrition sends him to the priest for the extreme unction, and when he returns they accompany him to the open grave. There Beauty, Strength, Wisdom, and The Five Senses all leave him at the eleventh hour. Even Contrition will not go with him all the way. He stays behind on the edge of the grave and speaks the final word:

*He has passed  
And paid what all of us must pay.  
Good Works shall yet report today  
Before Him who shall be judge of all.  
I think I hear the angels call  
Hosannah. The heaven is open wide  
Where Everyman shall now abide.*

This plot is of Buddhistic origin and reached the Western world through the medium of the famous storybook of Barlaam and Josaphat, which was written in Greek in the early seventh century and subsequently translated into nearly every European language. The author's adaptation of the parable to the stage was a master stroke. The play scored an immediate success. It was first performed at an Antwerp *Landjuweel*, an annual dramatic contest between visiting Chambers of Rhetoric. It was awarded first prize, and the many translations that were made of it in the sixteenth century testify to its continuous popularity. There is one in English, which was long regarded as the original play; but modern scholarship has proved convincingly that the Dutch text is the prior version.



All drama in western Europe is supposed to have sprung from the liturgy of the Church. In Dutch literature the earliest plays extant are of a secular character, though this does not, of course, prove that in the Netherlands the development of the drama was the reverse of that elsewhere. But unfortunately, no mystery plays of early date have been preserved, so that the beginnings of Dutch dramatic literature are hidden in obscurity.

We know more about the secular drama, thanks to the preservation of a Brussels manuscript containing four serious plays of a romantic cast and six coarse farces. One play of the former group was always followed by a farce; the two together made up a complete performance. Each mirrors on the stage an aspect of life, one its romance, the other its realism. Love guides the destinies of prince and gentle lady in the romantic play, its caricature in the disillusionment of married life is the theme of the farce. The woe that is in marriage is never the woe of the lady and her prince. The couple who fall out in the farce belong to a lowly station in life. The romantic play is courtly and borrows its plot from fairy tales and romances of chivalry; the farce derives its subject matter from those merry tales in verse known in French literature as *fabliaux*. Their juxtaposition on the stage showed the audience a twofold picture of life such as Chaucer aimed to present when he linked the Knight's tale with the ribald stories of the Miller and the Reeve.

These plays contain a nascent form of dramatic art and should be judged without unfair reference to the highly developed drama of a later age. The dramatis personae are primitive types of human excellence and wickedness, there being no intermediate degrees of good and bad between the best and the worst. The characters move in a world as simple as that of the fairy tales, a world where hearts are not tormented by doubts and misgivings, where belief follows utterance as night follows day,

where the sinners are demons and the virtuous are saints, where the wages of sin is perdition and the prize of true love happiness ever after. In such a world where all is well because all ends well, coincidence is not a freak of fortune but an essential part of the simple scheme. The invocation to God with which each play opens implies that divine providence controls the destinies of the people on the stage.

Of the manner of production only so much is known as the context of the plays reveals. One stage direction prescribes how the villain is to die: "Here they hang Robert," but leaves the question open whether the execution took place before the eyes of the audience. Most likely the hanging was duly performed on the stage after a skillful substitution of a life-size puppet for the actor. We know for certain that both painters and sculptors lent assistance in the staging of religious dramas; but the ten plays in the Brussels manuscript must have formed the repertory of a troupe of strolling players who could not afford to employ highly skilled labor. They probably did not use a painted back-drop. When the scene shifted, as it often did, from one country to another, the change of scene was probably indicated in the manner described in Sir Philip Sidney's contemptuous reference to the kind of ill-constructed drama "where you shall have Asia of the one side and Affrick of the other." The actors must have varied their manner of appearing on and leaving the stage according to the more or less primitive conditions of the scaffold on which they played. If there was no room behind the scene, they retired to the back of the stage after speaking their parts and sat down, not invisible but inactive. There they probably sat and were revealed to view at the first opening of the curtain, and while seated were understood to be completely out of the scene.

The stage plays of the strollers could not compare in beauty

of scenery and costume with the morality and mystery plays put on by the Chambers of Rhetoric in the cities of Flanders, Brabant, Holland, and Zeeland. These chambers were a kind of Poets' Guilds which, like the labor guilds, had their origin in Church organizations; but if they had been no more than clubs of the local scribblers and rhymesters, who came together periodically for the purposes of conviviality and reciprocal adulation, they would not have gained the social prominence that was indisputably theirs in the early sixteenth century. Their activities embraced much more than the cult of versification. They were prototypes of the American Community Center; they organized dramatic shows and competed with the Chambers of Rhetoric of other towns in playwriting and stagecraft; when the town was struck by a common calamity, and the ravages had to be repaired that were caused by fire or flood or raging storm, the chamber was called on to organize a charity drive and collect the funds needed for reconstruction; they were a prop and comfort to the city government in times of unrest and were called into conference when riots threatened, together with the civic guards, the guilds, and the merchants. Their importance in the social and political life of the country was recognized by the sovereign who, as Duke in Brabant, as Count in Flanders, Holland, and Zeeland, accepted honorary membership in the most prominent of these local chambers.

They were organized like the labor guilds. The presiding officer bore the title of Prince or, in Holland, of *Keizer*, which means emperor. He was usually a wealthy and popular citizen, but was not honored with the election for his gifts as a poet. The most skillful rhymester among the members was given the title of *Factor*. He was the leader of the club's rhetorical exercises and the maker of the play with which the chamber entered into competition with its rivals from other communities.

These annual dramatic contests were the Dutch democracy's substitute for the tournaments which chivalry had staged in the past. They were the chief event in a town's progress through the year, and were staged with no less splendor than were the jousts of medieval knighthood. Prizes were awarded for the most gorgeous entry, for the best play, for the finest costumes. It was a cause for communal rejoicing when the local chamber returned from the contest with one of these trophies. They were so precious and held in such esteem that the coveted prize, that costly thing of beauty, gave its name to the intercommunal contest itself: *Landjuweel*, land jewel, the burghers called it.

The greatest *Landjuweel* on record was held in 1561 by invitation of the Antwerp chamber. No fewer than fourteen hundred and twenty-six rhetoricians made their entries on horseback, accompanied by twenty-three floats and one hundred and ninety-seven other carriages. The procession was headed by the membership of the inviting chamber with trumpets, pipes, and drums; fools dressed up in gaudy colors added a note of merriment to the solemnity of the parade. The city had decorated itself with greens and flowers and garlands and with precious tapestries draped from the windows. The spectacle made so deep an impression on the English ambassador, who had come over from Brussels for the occasion, that he sent a lengthy report of it to his government.

The hostess chamber set the theme for the competing plays. Each had to be an answer to the question: "What is man's chief artistic inspiration?" The final performance was staged by the Antwerp chamber which bade its guests Godspeed with its Farewell Play. The entrants were warned that the government did not allow them to touch on political or religious topics. The authorities had taken warning from past experience. Thirty years earlier all the plays produced at an Antwerp *Landjuweel*

in answer to the question, "What is, in dying, man's greatest consolation?" had been tainted with heresy, and many a Factor had used the chamber's stage for the public venting of popular grievances and criticism of the secular powers. The bulk of the poetic and dramatic output of the Chambers of Rhetoric has scant literary value, but they played an important part in the social and communal life of the cities by acting as a sounding board for public opinion.

The chambers, which as we saw sprang from church organizations, retained throughout their century-long history the ties that bound them to their origin. At high festivals they lent assistance in the staging of liturgical dramas, such as the miracle plays showing the Seven Joys of the Virgin Mary, which were enacted in seven successive years on the first Sunday after the Assumption of the Holy Virgin in the city of Brussels. Every year on that Sunday in August a grand procession was held in which the entire population participated, the clergy with the Holy Sacrament, the magistracy, the guilds with their banners and escutcheons, the tradespeople with the tokens of their callings, the school children, the beggars; and paintings were carried along on floats depicting scenes from the Old and the New Testaments, and others passed by on which actors presented stories from the Scriptures. The chief event of that festive day was the dramatization of one of the Seven Joys of the Virgin. The text of the First Joy, as enacted in 1448, has been preserved; it was followed the next year by the second, the third was shown in 1450, and so on, until the cycle was completed with the seventh, which is the only other one of which the text is extant. A short summary of the first will give an idea of what the Brussels audiences were given to see and hear by the collaboration of artists and actors.

"Although the Annunciation is the principal theme," says the

prologue, "it is necessary to recount God's reason for assuming human flesh for our redemption." Thus in rapid succession the action shows Envy and Lucifer plotting Adam's fall; Eve's temptation and man's first disobedience; God's curse upon the serpent and man's expulsion from Eden; the lament of Adam and Eve; the joy of Lucifer and Envy; Lucifer's plea before God, who surrenders Man to him; Adam's death; Seth receiving from the angel in Paradise the twig from which salvation shall spring; Lucifer and Envy rejoicing over their rich harvest; Adam, Eve, David, Job, and Isaiah praying to God for release; Bitter Misery appealing to Fervent Prayer to intercede for them with God; Prayer calling Compassion to her aid; Compassion, Justice, Truth, arguing about Man's chance of Redemption; Truth holding that only an angel by his voluntary death can save mankind; Truth appealing to the angels in vain, as these remain silent; Compassion interceding for Man with God, and God prevailing upon the Son to die for Man's redemption; Peace, Compassion, Justice, and Truth giving praise and thanks to the Son; the priests of the temple rejecting Joachim's sacrifice because of his barrenness; God through his angel promising Joachim offspring; Joachim and Anna meeting at the Golden Gate; neighbors discussing their case and siding with Joachim against the priests; Anna thanking God for her pregnancy; Joachim announcing the birth of a daughter to the priests, who at the prompting of an angel call her Mary; Joachim and Anna presenting Mary to the priests for service in the temple; bishop and priests praising Mary's virtues, for which Joachim and Anna give thanks to God; the priests consulting God whether Mary shall marry or remain in the temple; an angel ordering them to summon all the men of David's tribe, each carrying a dry twig; three youths of David's tribe discussing the amazing summons; Joseph proved to be destined by God for Mary's husband;

and finally — the crowning episode of the drama — the Annunciation.

This dry summary of the scenes that make up the play reads like the catalogue of an exhibition of biblical paintings. There is indeed a close relationship between the stage of the mysteries and the workshop of the artists. The scenes on the stage were speaking pictures, the panels of the painters were silent stage shows. The actors supplied the artists with models for their compositions, and in many a case painters took an active part in the staging of mysteries. Their collaboration supplied the masses with visual instruction such as the movies are providing nowadays; but the emphasis was on religion and biblical lore, not — as in our more “enlightened” age — on the ways of the lover and the criminal. Book learning was a rare accomplishment before the age of the printed book, for manuscripts were few and expensive. Hence knowledge of the Scriptures was spread chiefly through the stage and the art of the painters.

Chiefly, not exclusively. Medieval memories were better trained than ours, and there were many illiterate souls who could recite whole chapters of the Bible which they had memorized while listening to a preacher reading the sacred text from a manuscript. It was the practice of the heretical sects of the period to spread Bible lore in that way among the masses. An inquisitor of Passau wrote a tract on heresy about the year 1260 in which he complained about the use of translations of the sacred books into the vulgar tongue. “I have heard and seen,” he wrote, “a certain unlettered countryman who used to recite the Book of Job word for word, and many others who knew the whole New Testament perfectly.”

It was not the Bible as we know it with which the unlettered were thus made familiar. In the late Middle Ages the Scriptures were retold in so-called story bibles, which contained only the

narrative parts of Holy Writ interspersed with legendary lore from various other sources. Any story about our first parents and the patriarchs that might be found in patristic literature or later writers partook in medieval opinion of the sanctity of orthodox Scripture. It was the subject matter itself, not its inclusion in the Vulgate, that made it sacred to the naïve belief of the pious brotherhoods from which the story bibles emanated.

Although there was nothing wrong in possessing a knowledge of the contents of Holy Writ, readers of the Bible text in the vernacular were suspected of being tainted with heresy. One of the charges against the Waldensians was their spreading of Bible lore by means of translations. In July, 1199, the Archbishop of Metz asked Pope Innocent III for his approval of certain measures he intended to take against these heretics; and having obtained it he had all translated Bibles burned that were found in Waldensian hands. The Pope's letter to the archbishop was later embodied in the Decretal of Gregory IX and was universally regarded as a canonical directive; and although the Holy Father had not positively condemned translations, medieval inquisitors acted on the theory that they were forbidden and that it was unlawful for the laity to have the sacred books in the native tongue.

In 1271 the Flemish poet Jacob van Maerlant wrote a rhymed text of the Bible story, which made it easy for listeners to learn it by rote. His *Rijmbibel* was not a translation of the Vulgate but of Petrus Comestor's *Historia Scolastica*, which was widely used as a schoolbook for the instruction of children in Bible lore.

It was the Latin that made it harmless; it became dangerous knowledge when retold in plain and easily understood Dutch. Maerlant incurred ecclesiastical censure, as he tells us himself in a later work from which he omitted all theological discus-



sions "because I have been subjected to attacks from the side of the papacy for having made known to lay people secret things out of the Bible."

Maerlant's experience stirred considerable commotion in circles that favored the Bible in the native tongue. The romances of chivalry that he wrote in his youth, the wearisome didactic works to which he turned in middle age, and the strophic poems on which his fame as a literary artist rests were never heard of in England, but the story of his reprimand by the papacy was still current there a hundred years later. It was referred to in a tract in favor of Bible translations which is attributed to John Purvey: "It was heard of a worthy man of Almain that some time a Fleming (his name was Jacob Merland) translated all the Bible into Flemish. For which deed he was summoned before the pope of great enmity and the book was taken to examination and truly approved. It was delivered to him again, in confusion to his enemies."

The story bible in prose that became so popular in the fifteenth century was a tool of a reform movement that had started in the previous century. Before that time all attempts at rehabilitation of the monastic life had been imported from the south. Brogne, Cluny, Clairvaux, Prémontré successively revived the repeatedly backsliding life in the houses of religion. The so-called Modern Devotion was a similar attempt that started among the Dutch themselves.

Women took an active part in it. They were not the subdued, inarticulate creatures they were doomed to be in many other parts of Europe. We have seen that the following of Tanchelm, whose heresies created a dangerous disturbance in the early twelfth century, consisted largely of women; and in the next century pietism and religious exaltation among women became a social phenomenon of far-reaching importance. The Church

authorities became alarmed and did their best to stem the extravagances that resulted from hysteria and hypersensitive emotionalism. In 1245 the Friars Preachers were charged with the pastoral care of Dominican nunneries in German lands, and it was chiefly due to them that the unbridled ecstasies and vagaries were kept within bounds of doctrine and decency.

There was no census in those days and the figures that are given of the population of individual cities and of the Low Countries as a whole are far from reliable; but we need not doubt that the women outnumbered the men. Internecine feuds, wars, labor revolts, the perils of travel, collected a heavier toll among the males than among the opposite sex. During the crusades tens of thousands were far away from home and a large percentage of them never returned. The Second Crusade aroused such religious fervor in the Low Countries that several towns were said to have seen the larger part of their menfolk embark for the Holy Land. For many women marriage remained an unattainable goal, and the only security that these lonely souls could find was behind convent walls. That refuge, however, was open only for ladies of rich and aristocratic families; the poor who had nothing to bring in were not admitted.

A solution to their problems was found in the rise of the *beguinages*, non-monastic communities of pious women who lived, each in her own small cottage, within an enclosure but not out of the world, for in the hours not devoted to prayer and meditation they made themselves useful to the citizenry as teachers of children in burgher homes, as visitors and comforters of the sick, like our modern district nurses; and those who were without resources might earn a modest living with manual labor. The first of these *beguinages* was organized at Liège, around the middle of the twelfth century, by Lambert le Bègue, a noble evangelist and preacher who devoted his life

to stemming the rising tide of heresy not by persecuting the misguided but by remedying the social evils on which heresy thrived.

The Dominicans tried to steer the doctrinal vagaries of women into normal channels by promoting the spread of mystical texts in the vernacular, since among women the knowledge of Latin was rare. Their ignorance was a boon to Dutch literature, for in the mystical poetry and prose of the late Middle Ages that literature reached its high-water mark.

The letters and love songs of Hadewijch are early specimens of mystical writing. The identity of this gifted woman has never been clearly established. All that we know about her is what she tells us herself of the trials of her God-seeking life. The longing soul must pass through the ordeal of sharing Christ's passion in the flesh before the disembodied state can be attained in which the union with God is consummated. She sometimes tried to express sensations that can better be rendered by music, and in groping for the words that had to image what she felt she often blurred the picture by the obscurity of her diction. Hadewijch kept a record of the trances in which she was one with the divine lover. Their duration varied; some lasted half an hour, others from three to four days. Her descriptions of these ecstasies are the earliest examples of the art of prose writing in Dutch. She probably lived in the middle of the thirteenth century.

The greatest of all Dutch mystics was Jan van Ruusbroeck, in whose prose, a century after Hadewijch, the movement found its noblest expression. He lived as a hermit in the forest of Soignes not far from Brussels, though he did not shun the companionship of his fellow men. He was joined there by loving disciples who formed a community that took the rule and habit of the Augustinian canons. To Groenendael, as the settlement was called, many visitors came to observe the holy life of these

God-devoted men and to learn wisdom from Ruusbroeck's conversation.

A frequent caller was Geert Groote, the founder of the Brotherhood of the Common Life at Deventer; he admired the spirit of humility that prevailed among the Groenendael brethren and often stayed among them for several months. Yet Groote was a man of entirely different temperament. Ruusbroeck's life was an escape from the world; Groote invaded the world to make it a better one. The contemplative life in which Ruusbroeck found the way to God was not for him; his restless spirit drove him to travel through the diocese of Utrecht and under episcopal license to exhort the people to follow in the footsteps of Christ and to help them to seek God.

He was a native of Deventer, a rich man's son, and as a wandering student had gathered knowledge in Paris and other foreign universities. There was no seat of higher learning in the Low Countries; the oldest university of the Netherlands is that of Louvain, and this was not founded until half a century after Groote's death. He must have studied hard, for he was a man of great learning, but he did not scorn the dissipations that life in Paris offered to the young student. He was more pleasure-bent than heaven-bent in his youthful days. His conversion was sudden. While watching one day a public game at Cologne, a stranger came to him and said quietly, "Why are you here? You ought to become another man."

These words quickened all that was best in him. To become another man was from then on the aim of all his days. He went to a Carthusian monastery in the neighborhood of Arnhem, where a former fellow student of his Paris days was prior. Here he was in retreat for three years, "tilling the field of his own heart, wiping away the mildew of his old life, and restoring the image of his inner man to purity," as Thomas a Kempis says

in his biography of the founder of the pious brotherhood.

The restoration of that image was not the ultimate goal, but only the means that was to make him worthy of a higher task: to call the masses to a changed life. The New Devotion of which he was the apostle was a dedication to the way of Christ, and as a lay preacher he called his hearers with impassioned eloquence to conversion and self-improvement. He neither encouraged nor strove himself for ecstatic states. He was for balance and moderation; the mortification of the flesh should not be carried to the verge of self-torture and starvation. Christ Himself had led the normal life of his simple fellow Jews, and Groote realized that he could not demand from his followers more than what was normal. He wanted them to walk in the steps of Jesus and thus become "other men" and be a leaven to the world; he did not expect from them an imitation of Christ on the cross.

Groote himself was capable of that supreme sacrifice. His fearless denunciation of abuses in the Church incurred the wrath of his superiors. His episcopal license to preach was revoked and the fiery evangelist was silenced. That was a heavy cross for him to bear. He proved that his having become "another man" was not an empty phrase. He accepted defeat in humility and resignation. "Thou knowest," we read in the *Imitatio Christi*, "what is profitable for my progress; and how well tribulation serves to scour off the rust of my defects." Geert Groote might have written those words, for it was in that spirit that he submitted to the bishop's order as an expression of the will of God.

It is possible that he actually did write them. There is a school of thought that sees in Thomas a Kempis the editor and copyist of a text that was originally written by Groote. Thomas was born in 1380 and was not ordained priest until 1412. Yet there are manuscripts of the *Imitatio* that were written in the early

years of the fifteenth century, when Thomas was barely out of his teens. There is in the library at Lübeck an older version of the second and third books of the *Imitatio* which some scholars believe to be from the hand of Geert Groote. If they are right, Thomas' share in the work would have been limited to remodeling and expanding that version into the book by which his name became immortal, the purest and noblest record of that inner experience which the mystics of the IJsel Valley regarded as the real life.

The IJsel is an arm of the Rhine that runs northward to flow into the Zuider Zee. It runs through fertile land past Deventer, Zwolle, and Kampen, three prosperous market towns that were members of the German Hansa. The Brotherhood of the Common Life, which Groote started at Deventer, spread its influence down the IJsel Valley and to the Hansa cities along the Rhine and the coast of the Baltic Sea. Groote himself did not live to see its full development. He died of the plague in 1384, when Thomas a Kempis was four years old. His work was carried on by Florentius Radewijns, who turned his own house at Deventer into a home for the community of young men whom Groote had gathered around himself and employed as copyists of manuscripts. There they lived together under one roof, without adhering to any monastic rule. Thomas a Kempis was one of them from 1392 to 1399 and left a description of the life they led: "They humbly imitated the manner of apostolic life, and having one heart and mind in God, every man brought what was his own into the common stock, and receiving simple food and clothing avoided taking thought for the morrow. Of their own will they devoted themselves to God and all busied themselves in obeying their rector or his vicar. They labored carefully in copying books, being bent continually on sacred study and devout meditation."

Homes for women were organized on the same plan, one amongst others in Groote's own house at Deventer. These sororities differed from the *beguinages* not only in their architectural aspects. They attracted women of the middle class, whereas the *beguines* were largely recruited from the poorer sections of the population. The Sisters of the Common Life were as a rule better educated than the *beguines*, and engaged in teaching and the copying of manuscripts. It was in their homes that the story bible in prose was diligently read and multiplied.

Some of the Brethren of the Common Life, preferring discipline to freedom, yearned for a closer association than the Brotherhood gave them and, withdrawing to the monastery of Windesheim, submitted themselves to the rule of the regular canons of St. Augustine as Ruusbroeck's disciples had done in the forest of Soignes. This Windesheim initiative met with wide acclaim. Many monasteries and convents, being eager for self-improvement, sought identification with the Windesheim manner of life and joined together into a so-called Congregation, which recognized Windesheim as its head. A papal legate who visited the Netherlands in 1450 was so much impressed by their discipline and piety that he put the Windesheim Congregation in charge of a monastic reform in several German bishoprics.

Their steady rise to popularity earned the Brethren the enmity of the great mendicant orders, the Franciscans and Dominicans, who saw their influence upon the masses weakened as that of the Brotherhood grew. The Dominican Matthaeus Grabo denounced them to the Council of Constance; but the Council took a juster view of the Brotherhood, and its right to existence was recognized by papal bulls in which the devout were highly praised as people of good will. The most popular preacher of that age in the Netherlands, Johannes Brugman, went around the country reviling the Brethren, as he later confessed, "like a

barking dog in calumnious terms." When he came to know them he frankly admitted his error and conceived a deep and abiding admiration for them.

Brugman was born in the nineties of the fourteenth century. He was a native of Kempen, a small town in the county of Cleves which was also the birthplace of his more famous contemporary Thomas a Kempis. Brugman attended a monastery school and was admitted into the order of St. Francis. Being young, emotional, and impressionable, he was easily led astray by the bad example of older monks. The Franciscan order no longer lived up to the high ideals of its noble founder. Immorality among the friars was open and unashamed. The repulsive picture that Chaucer painted of a mendicant was typical not only of conditions in England. All too many friars of that sort infested the Continent as well. In the Netherlands those unworthy individuals were known by the name of *Gaudentes*, that is, pleasure seekers. Brugman joined the pleasure seekers in his youth. He sorely repented it in later years. In a sermon that he preached at Amsterdam in 1462 he addressed himself in a dramatic dialogue: "Oh, Brugman, Brugman, what a wicked man you used to be. You used to go around with long blades and help to keep brothels." It is only on this evidence supplied by himself that he has been found guilty. But it is not unlikely that the converted sinner exaggerated his past wickedness for the sake of the sensational effect upon his hearers. By the time he began to impress his name upon the Dutch public his life was without blemish and an example to his fellow men.

There was a movement on foot among the Minorites themselves to cleanse the order and to enforce the rule. The supporters of this reform called themselves *Observants*, whereas the self-indulgent who were opposed to any house cleaning were known as *Conventuals*. The reform had started in Italy and spread



northward into France. The convent of St. Francis at St. Omer was a stronghold of the *Observants*, and it was there that Brugman, after his conversion, found peace for his soul and communion with like-minded brethren. He cannot have wasted so very much time on vain pursuits, for he was honored at St. Omer for his great learning and made a lecturer on theology. In the fifties he was traveling widely through the northern Netherlands to spread the *Observance* and to preach to the masses. His eloquence must have impressed them deeply, for it brought him proverbial immortality, for to "talk like Brugman" is still a standing phrase in Dutch to describe the superlative of persuasive eloquence.

The fame of present-day orators can be deflated among posterity by the testimony of their recorded voices. The eloquent who lived before Edison's age were more fortunate. The acclaim they won from their contemporaries is secure from the criticism of later generations. It is highly probable that a modern Dutchman would remain unmoved if he could listen to a record of one of Brugman's sermons. The impression that he made on his audience was the combined effect of various factors that do not come into play in our age. First of all, a good sermon was a rare performance five hundred years ago. The thousands who flocked to the churches to hear him were impressed by an art that was to them unique, for the average parish priest had neither the knowledge to compose nor the skill to deliver a sermon.

A church synod held at Doornik in 1366 declared preaching to be obligatory for parish priests; but the wording gives one reason to suspect that the synod's order was a counsel of perfection. "If there were parish priests," the synod declared, "who were unable to preach, they would have to invite at least once a month someone else who could take their place." A century later, in Brugman's time, there was perhaps not such a dearth

of sermonizers; yet the common run of parish priests had neither the culture nor the talent that made for eloquence. Brugman spoke to audiences that were unspoiled and uncritical. He impressed them by his learning, his imagery — for there was a poet in him — his emotionalism, and his thundering voice.

That he overawed his hearers by volume of sound is clear from the testimony of a contemporary whose criticism can be trusted because he was an unprejudiced admirer of the preacher. Dionysius the Carthusian was a religious enthusiast and one of the most learned mystics of the Netherlands. It has been said of him that "if one reads Dionysius, there is nothing that one does not read." He knew all that was known in his time and redigested it with indefatigable industry in book after book, which fill together forty-five quarto volumes. One of these was written at Brugman's request, a treatise on *The Doctrine and the Rules of a Christian Life*. The author called Brugman "a god-fearing and very devout father, who was justly called John because he was a vessel of God's grace, and no less justly Brugman [which means Bridgeman] because he was an untiring and zealous laborer among the believers and opened for them, by example and message, a bridge across which they passed from the hardships and unrest of the stormy sea of life to the lovely and quiet haven of eternal salvation." But there was one thing that he wanted to warn him against: he should practice moderation, temper his overhot zeal, control his towering spirit, and regulate his overflowing love. To all offerings he should apply that salt of which the source of wisdom said, "have salt in yourselves." He should prepare with salt also the offering of his lips. For this continuous, strong, and daily straining of the voice beyond its power "did violence to nature, weakened his strength, dried up his brains, and was believed to injure the senses, especially in a man broken and enfeebled by age."

On his restless wanderings Brugman also visited the lower IJssel Valley, the original home of the Brotherhood of the Common Life. He often preached in their fraternities, and on one of these occasions he said to the brethren, "If I could lay down my cowl and go over to you, I should not tarry long, because of the fruit which I daily find among you. For I have preached many years to great concourse of people and acclaim, and I know not if I have really converted even one single old woman. But you see the fruit before your eyes in the crowd of boys who leave their parents, friends, and fatherland for the love of God and joyfully speed along the way which the Lord himself has shown them through you."

Brugman lived in a period of social upheaval, of strife between the classes, of stark contrasts between appalling poverty and vulgar display of wealth, of unbridled passions and shameless immorality in high places. But he had confidence in the stamina of the plain people. He thought, with Chaucer:

*That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?  
For if a preest be foul in whom we truste,  
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste.*

If the plain people lived badly, their betters were to blame who did not give them a better example. By his preaching he tried to lead them back to decency and sober living. He would not have spent his life in wearying travel from place to place throughout the length and breadth of the Netherlands if there was actually doubt in his mind of the effect of his labors. He knew that many owed him salvation, not only a single old woman, but thousands of both sexes and various ages. He had weeded the neglected gardens of their souls, had uprooted the evil trees that choked the growth of herbs and flowers, and planted the lilies of Christ's love.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE AGE OF ERASMUS

**C**HARLES THE BOLD, son of Philip the Good, was the last of the Burgundian dukes. He perished on the battlefield of Nancy in 1477, leaving an only daughter, Mary, who followed him five years later into the grave. The report of the duke's fatal end was welcome news to King Louis XI of France; he had the duchy seized by his troops and incorporated with the kingdom, from which it had been severed a century earlier. Its return to the French crown cut the ties that had bound the Low Countries to Burgundy, although they remained under the sovereignty of Mary and her descendants.

Mary was the wife of Maximilian of Hapsburg, who twelve years after her death was elected German emperor. Their son Philip married Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. Philip and Joanna had one son, who was born at Ghent in the year 1500. This boy became the sovereign ruler of the Netherlands when Philip prematurely died in 1506; ten years later he succeeded his maternal grandparents as King of Spain; and when Maximilian died, in 1521, Charles was elected emperor in his grandfather's stead. Thus a native of the Netherlands became, at the youthful age of twenty-one, the ruler over a large part of Europe.

Of all his territories the Low Countries, though small in extent, were the richest and the most populous. Visitors who had gone there on business — no one traveled for pleasure in

those days — were amazed at the general well-being, signs of which they saw in town and country alike. Thomas Basin, the writer of a history of the reigns of Charles VII and Louis XI of France, told that King Louis, on the day after his coronation at Rheims, had described to him the impression that France had made on him when he came back from a five years' residence in the Netherlands. In the Low Countries under the Burgundian dukes, he said, were any number of beautiful and wealthy towns, the houses handsome and well-furnished, the inhabitants of town and country free, well-dressed, cultured, good-mannered, cheerful, and so contented that everything one set eyes on presented a picture of happiness and liberty; nowhere dilapidated houses nor any rubbish heaps; but as soon as he had set foot in his own kingdom, ruins everywhere, the fields neglected and uncultivated, a wilderness, the people haggard and in rags, as if they had crept forth out of caves and dungeons.

Basin was not a favorite of King Louis and had good reason for hating him; it may well be that he took a vicious pleasure in presenting him in his own words as ruler over so wretched a country. The contrast, however, was not a fiction of Basin's malignity; he may have overdrawn it but we can be sure that the comparison was quoted in substance as the king had made it. There is testimony from other sources — English, Italian, Spanish, German — that corroborates the impression the Low Countries had made on Louis XI.

Ghent and Bruges were no longer the principal cities in the early sixteenth century. The Burgundian dukes had not felt at home among their turbulent Flemish subjects, who were always ready to rebel. They preferred to reside in Brussels or in the quietude of Mechelen in the duchy of Brabant, where labor riots were less frequent and the people were submissive to their patrician local rulers. It was not the loss of the duke's favor,

though, that caused the decline of the once so powerful twin cities. The competition of England, where immigrants from Flanders had started rival spinning mills, and that of the looms in the surrounding countryside were chiefly to blame. The burghers of Ghent and Bruges saw the handwriting on the wall, but instead of yielding to the tendencies of the new age they clung all the more firmly to the medieval protectionist system that had brought them prosperity in the past. Their guild restrictions became more and more tyrannous and irksome and drove the trade to seek freedom elsewhere.

Freedom from guild impediments was found in Antwerp. Its port was open to all foreigners who had something to sell or were willing to buy. Ghent and Bruges kept the English cloth dealers out as unwelcome competitors; Antwerp attracted them by offering them liberal privileges. Aliens were granted the same rights that were enjoyed by Antwerp citizens. The Flemish cities maintained severely supervised trade halls where all labor products were tested and officially marked as of good quality; Antwerp since 1515 had a modern exchange where orders were taken on the strength of samples on exhibit and not on trust of governmental guarantees. Antwerp held with the Roman maxim *Caveat emptor*; the buyer himself had to be on his guard.

Such freedom from restraints drew dealers and merchants from all parts of western Europe to the city on the Scheldt. Medieval cities attracted buyers periodically to their annual or biennial fairs; Antwerp was a perennial mart, where foreigners with money in their pockets were welcome guests at all times and seasons. Even kings found advantage in dealing there. Their royal majesties of England, Spain, and Portugal maintained agents, called factors, who sold on their behalf the products of English industries and the imports from the Americas and the

Indies in the Antwerp market. An early story has it that a certain Nicolaes van Renterghem was the first Antwerp dealer to buy Indian spices from the Portuguese factor for export to cities in south Germany. The merchants there, who were accustomed to obtaining oriental wares by the Alpine trade route from Venice, were suspicious and reluctant to buy at first. They doubted whether these spices coming from Antwerp in northern Europe could be genuine products of the Orient. Before long, however, these Germans came to Antwerp themselves and established agencies, called factories: first the Hochstetters, then the Fuggers, and lastly the Welsers, all three powerful merchant families of Augsburg. The accession of Charles, the young sovereign of the Netherlands, to the imperial throne, aided in Antwerp's rise to the rank of a world metropolis. It was the equal of Venice in northern Europe.

Freedom from medieval restraints was also characteristic of the social life of Antwerp. The Italian ambassador Quirini wrote in 1506 about the city's women: "They have very free manners, and spend all their leisure in dancing, singing, and making music, being bent on nothing but pleasure; and they run their households without any supervision by their husbands." Quirini's countryman, Lodovico Guicciardini, said that "at Antwerp women had more privileges and advantages than anywhere else in this country. For in all other provinces and cities the woman, be she nobly or humbly born, is responsible for her husband's debts as he is for hers. But in this city she is not, unless she be engaged in business, as many here are. But the husband must pay his wife's debts, even those she contracted before her marriage."

The Spaniard Vives, a strict moralist, was shocked by the lightheartedness of the Flemish women. "When their husbands come home tired and in need of rest and solitude," he said, "they

turn them out of doors to seek distraction in the tavern, where they are tempted to all sorts of vices and immorality; and the wives run around and gossip, to the neglect of their households." Elsewhere, however, he praises them for their modest behavior in church, "for they go there in mantles that cover their heads so closely that they cannot be looked at nor look at others coming from the opposite direction, unless they shamelessly turn around." In Mediterranean countries, where women were closely guarded all day, they went to church to see and to be seen; in the Netherlands, where they enjoyed unlimited freedom, they could afford a demure behavior in church.

Albrecht Dürer, the Nürnberg artist, was equally amazed at the emancipation of the weaker sex and apparently did not approve of it. He came to Antwerp for a prolonged visit in 1520, and kept a diary of his journey to the Netherlands which, though it is chiefly a record of expenses and of places and persons visited, is nevertheless a very precious document because of the light it throws on manners and customs among the Dutch of that period.

Dürer was accompanied on the trip by his wife, Agnes Frey, and their servant Susanna. The three, on arriving at Antwerp, put up at the *Engelenborch* in the Wood Street. He paid the landlord, Joos Blankvelt, eleven guilders a month for their accommodation. Dürer took his meals with mine host in the parlor, paying two stivers a meal, and his wife and maid ate theirs in the kitchen, where they cooked their own food. Sometimes the diary records as something out of the common: "I have eaten one meal with my wife." When Dürer dined out with friends, Frau Agnes did not go with him. Once, however, he noted in his diary: "My wife and my maid have eaten one day in Mr. Tomasin's house." This was Tommaso Bombelli, an Italian merchant who was an admirer and patron of Dürer.



To judge from the wording of the entry, Frau Agnes, though dining "in the house," was not present at table, but took her midday meal and supper with Susanna in the kitchen. "That makes four meals," her husband wrote, meaning four meals for which he needed not pay at the inn.

This Cinderella treatment was not in accordance with Antwerp custom. On the Sunday after their arrival the painters of the city invited Dürer to their hall with his wife and maid, "and all their wives were there too." He evidently found it necessary to put this on record to justify the presence of his own womenfolk at the banquet. It was probably for Agnes Frey a frivolity that she felt to be immodest and improper. Not wishing to share in pleasures that she did not consider her due, she found safety and self-respect by withdrawing with her maid to the kitchen, her proper domain from the Nürnberg point of view. Socially she was her husband's superior, for she belonged to one of the patrician families of Nürnberg, whereas Dürer belonged to the handicrafts. Not social inferiority but her sex made her abstain from amusements in which her Antwerp sisters freely indulged.

Dürer must have approved of his wife's self-effacement. Although he was a modernist in art, he shared the common view of woman's inferiority to man. Even in Thomas More's *Utopia* there was no equality, for in that ideal state "parents chastise their children and husbands their wives." Among the artists of Antwerp whom Dürer mentions in his diary was the miniature painter Suzanna Horebout. He bought one of her miniatures for the sum of one guilder, the value of ten meals at the *Engelborch*, and added this comment to the record of his purchase: "It is a great marvel that a woman should make so much money!" He himself received no more for a portrait drawing, though his maid got no less as a tip from the patrons to whom he

sent her with one of his prints as a present. That overpaid artist Suzanna Horebout soon afterwards followed her brother Lucas to London, where the two were in great demand as miniature painters at the court of Henry VIII. The king and his courtiers must have paid her more in shillings than the value of that one Antwerp guilder that Dürer thought exorbitant.

Dürer was paid at Antwerp for a portrait in oil twelve times the value of a drawing. "I have painted a good Veronica face in oil; it is worth twelve guilders," he noted in the diary. When King Christian of Denmark came to the city, he sat for Dürer and rewarded him royally with thirty guilders. For his woodcuts he charged five stivers apiece, only one stiver more than he paid for a meal at the inn. It is difficult to translate these figures into modern values, but one may get an idea of what they meant to Dürer and to the citizens of Antwerp by comparing them with the prices of things that were for sale. He gave twenty-three stivers for a fur coat of rabbitskin, just three stivers more than he received for a portrait drawing, he put down thirty-one stivers for a red woollen shirt and ten for an ivory comb. His doctor charged him from six to eight stivers a visit, which was more than he received for one of his woodcuts. At a horse fair held at Whitsuntide he saw a stallion sold for seven hundred guilders, about sixty times the price of one of his portraits in oil. No wonder he did not come home any the richer for his visit to those prosperous Low Countries. "In all my doings, spendings, sales, and other dealings in the Netherlands, in all my affairs with high and low, I have suffered loss," he noted regretfully at the end of his diary.

He had no reason, though, to complain of any lack of appreciation on the part of the Dutch. Antwerp proved itself a home of cultured people who were aware of his greatness as an artist and anxious to honor his genius. One need only read his

description of the banquet in the guild hall of the painters to realize how pleased he was with the respect that was shown to him. "As I was being led to the table, everyone stood up as if they were leading some great lord. There were among them men of high position, who all showed me the greatest respect and bowed low to me, and said they would do everything in their power to serve and please me. And as I sat there in honor, there came the messenger of the City Council with two servants and presented to me four cans of wine from the magistrates of Antwerp, who had told him to say that they wished thereby to show their respect for me and to assure me of their good will; wherefor I returned them my humble thanks and offered my humble services. Thereupon came Master Peter, the city architect, and gave me two cans of wine with offer of his willing service. So when we had spent time together, merrily, till late into the night, they accompanied us home with lanterns in great honor."

The city council even offered him a good house and a pension of three hundred Philip's guilders if he would settle at Antwerp. Wherever he went he was welcomed with similar proof of the high esteem in which the Dutch held his art. Standing one day on the top of the tower at Ghent and looking down on that large city, he felt his heart swell with pride at the thought that he was known there for a great man.

Dürer had not come to Antwerp to sell his art; income from that source was only a by-product of his business trip to the Netherlands. He had undertaken the troublesome journey to petition the young emperor in person for a renewal of the pension that Charles' grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian, had granted him. On November 12, 1520, a hundred days after his arrival, his petition was favorably passed upon, but not until July 12 of the following year did Dürer start on his homeward

journey. He was still in the Netherlands when tidings reached Antwerp that Martin Luther, on his return from Worms, had been seized by his enemies and had probably been murdered. He was an ardent adherent of the Wittenberg reformer, and the emotion that he felt on hearing this false rumor found vent in an eloquent passage whose lyrical and exalted tone contrasts strangely with the rest of the diary's pages. "Oh, all ye pious Christian men, help me to lament this God-inspired man and pray to God that He will send us another enlightened man. Oh, Erasmus of Rotterdam, where wilt thou stay? Dost thou see how the unjust tyranny of worldly power and the might of darkness prevail? Hear, thou knight of Christ, ride on beside the Lord Jesus; guard the truth, win the martyr's crown!"

A month and a half before Dürer arrived in the Netherlands the papal bull had appeared whereby Pope Leo X condemned Luther's teaching as heresy. He must have heard the question discussed among the Dutch whether the young sovereign would authorize the execution of the ban in his domains. It did not seem likely that he would. The tolerance and moderation of which Erasmus was the most eloquent spokesman were the common attitude of the large majority of the Dutch masses, thanks to the teaching of the Modern Devotion, and Charles V himself owed his mental and intellectual training to a man who, like Erasmus, had been a disciple of the Brotherhood of the Common Life. And when through his influence this former tutor became Leo's successor on the papal throne, it was hopefully assumed that the ban, as far as the territories under his sway were concerned, would remain a scrap of paper.

The circumstances of Pope Adrian's election and his short and stormy tenure of office make an interesting but depressing story. The rivalry between the royal houses of France and Spain (the latter having inherited its anti-French attitude from the

Burgundian dukes), the menace of a Turkish invasion, the Lutheran secession from the Church, and the persecution of heretics that it provoked, kept Europe in a state of turmoil.

Adrian did not covet the power and responsibilities of the papacy. The news of his election was to him as great a surprise as to the rest of the world. He owed it to the rivalry between the factions within the College of Cardinals, who could not agree on one of the several candidates then present in Rome. Adrian was not among them. He was in Spain at the time, where together with Cardinal Ximenes he held the reins of government for the absent king. The new pope was enthroned in January, 1522. His entry into Rome took place without pomp, much to the disgust and chagrin of the citizens. He never became popular among them. His predecessor, a member of the house of Medici, had been a generous patron of learning, art, and letters. Scholars, poets, artists, musicians were called to Rome and given liberal stipends by their splendor-loving benefactor. The new pope frowned on this worldly magnificence. His austerity and zeal for reform blew like a chilling blast through the garden of culture that Leo X had tended with such care.

The cardinals, especially the aristocrats among them, despised this low-born upstart from the barbarous north. Adrian was born of humble parents in the city of Utrecht, and was educated in a school of the Brethren of the Common Life. From there he went to the University of Louvain, where he studied philosophy and theology, subjects that he afterwards taught there himself. His solid learning, effective delivery, and skill in debate attracted large audiences to his lectures and won him high rank among his fellow teachers. He finally became Vice Chancellor of the university. In 1507 the Emperor Maximilian appointed him tutor to the young Prince Charles. A close friendship de-

veloped between pupil and master, to which the latter owed his rapid preferment to ever higher positions of honor: Bishop of Tortosa in Spain, Inquisitor General of Aragon, Regent of Spain, General of the United Inquisitions of Aragon and Castile, Cardinal Priest, and finally head of the Church of Rome. The disciple of the Brethren of the Common Life remained throughout his phenomenal career a strict adherent to their reform movement. He earnestly strove as cardinal and as pope to abolish abuses, but his attempts to improve the system of granting indulgences and suppressing the practice of simony were thwarted by the cardinals; his zeal for economy by canceling the stipends for artists and men of letters was ridiculed as the thrift of a petty bourgeois blind to the beauty of art and classical antiquity. A pope's life was miserable, he was heard to complain, for he was not free to introduce the good he was after. He died on the fourteenth of September, 1523, a year and a half after his enthronement, leaving Europe in the throes of schism, civil strife, persecution, and national rivalries. He had wanted to be, as Erasmus expressed it, not a worldly prince but an evangelical teacher, a father instead of a despot. But the parties at strife would not listen to their father. They rather followed the despots whose ambitions would lead them astray and were to plunge Europe into the chaos which is war.

Erasmus, like Adrian, was a disciple of the Brethren of the Common Life. He attended their famous school at Deventer and spent some time in the monastery of Steyn near Gouda which belonged to the Windesheim congregation. But the virtues of humility and selflessness which were cultivated among the Brethren were never his. Erasmus thirsted for fame when he was still an obscure monk at Steyn. The monastery is no longer in existence; all that remains of it is the name *'t Klooster*

(the Cloister), which belongs to an old farmhouse now occupying its site. A wooden gate forming part of the room where the cheese is made is all that is left of the monastery buildings. Old though it be, Erasmus probably never passed through it. For he left Steyn about 1493, and the date on the door is 1519. The scenery cannot be much different from what it was when the young monk looked out from the window of his cell: green pastures dotted with cattle, ditches lined with pollard willows, pools where wild birds swarm across the mirrored clouds, dikes stretching toward the horizon along the low-lying polders. Not the kind of landscape that stirs the imagination. Erasmus longed for a different life in a different scene, far away from peasants and boorish monks, among the great scholars of the age. In his *Ciceronianus*, a generation later, he wrote of Alexander Hegius, his former headmaster at Deventer: "He was a learned, pious, and eloquent man, but owing to his contempt of fame he did not achieve anything great." Erasmus, at the age of twenty, was determined to achieve something great, and realizing that it could not be done at Steyn he seized the first opportunity that offered to escape from the monastic brotherhood. Thus he began the wandering life that ended at Basle in 1536. It was the life that suited his taste. When Zurich offered him an honorary citizenship he wrote to Zwingli: "I thank you cordially for the affection which you and your city show me, but I wish to be a citizen of the world."

Cosmopolitanism was nothing new. The scholars of the Middle Ages formed an international brotherhood held together by their use of the Latin language by means of which the learned of different nations overcame the linguistic barriers that kept their lay countrymen apart. The determined quest for fame, on the other hand, was a trait in Erasmus that marked him a

man of the new age. His teachers at Deventer would not have approved of his ambition; those who wish to imitate Christ should seek to forget themselves.

Erasmus Roterodamus he styled himself on the title pages of his books. It is a strange inconsistency in the scholar who gloried in his cosmopolitan homelessness that all through life he insisted on informing the world of the particular spot in that world that had been his first home. In spite of his professed detachment he must have retained a weak spot in his heart for the scene of his childhood. To his friend Budaeus he wrote: "That you are patriotic will be praised by some and easily forgotten by everyone; but in my opinion it is more philosophic to treat men and things as though we held this world the common fatherland of all." Patriotism was to him an unwise surrender to an emotion that a wise man keeps subdued. He has left many an utterance in which his love of country comes to the surface, but in his guarded moments, which he would have called his better ones, he kept them under control.

It is hard for us moderns, to whom the Latin that he wrote has become a forgotten language, as dead to the ear as to the eye, to understand what it was that won him such wide acclaim among his contemporaries. It should be realized that he was popular with only a small minority of European citizens, a minority that formed an intellectual elite; it was this elite whose approval decided the worth of a book, not the acclaim of the masses. Hence it was possible for so erudite a work as his edition of the New Testament to become a best seller. Even his most popular publications, *Encomium Morias* or *Praise of Folly* and the *Colloquia*, an entertaining schoolbook for boys to learn Latin without tears, were not written for the many. Before 1530 only three of his many publications were available in Dutch translations. The letters that he wrote to friends and correspondents



all over Europe were for sale in manuscript copies in the book-stores of the Continent, but booksellers in those days catered only to the learned. The customers of the booksellers were scholars and educated laymen, and it was their acclaim that declared Erasmus to be the greatest author of his age.

His professed purpose as a man of letters was to liberate men's minds of superstitions and bigotries, to free them of ignorance and mental lethargy. In one of his most brilliant *Colloquies* he has an abbot rebuke a lady for reading Latin books. Learning in a woman, he tells her, offends both common opinion and custom. To which she replies: "What have I to do with custom, which is the mistress of all evil practices? We ought to accustom ourselves to the best things, and by that means that which was uncustomary would look pleasant, and that which seemed unbecoming would look graceful." Thus to defy tradition in defense of progress is true liberalism. No wonder that the conservatives of his time decried him as a dangerous radical.

Yet radical he was not. He was a middle-of-the-road man, a lover of moderation and tolerance. Luther's dogmatic scruples left him indifferent, the reformer's violence repelled him. Dürer's "Knight of Christ" was not made of the wood out of which martyrs are carved. He stood for reform within, not for secession from, the Church. And when Luther's intransigence brought on the schism, Erasmus served the cause of reformation by not seceding. Luther's separatism threatened to destroy that European unity which was the very element in which Erasmus' genius thrived. His cosmopolitanism was not a studied attitude but the natural life for him to lead. Europe was his habitat and the learned intercourse with international scholarship his mental food. He could trot the globe without nostalgia because the Church was his ubiquitous home. He was true to his Dutch origin in insisting on a house cleaning. Being a Hollander he

could not see it defiled and live comfortably in it. But he would rather bear discomfort than leave it for a more sanitary home of Luther's building.

The irony of fate willed that Luther's revolution should take its course before the Erasmian reformation within the Church could be accomplished. For the Counter Reformation was an act of self-discipline of which the Church of Rome would not have been capable without the chastening of Luther's lash. The two, though bitter opponents in later life, appear in retrospect to have been allies, for Erasmus, while preaching to Rome in the wilderness of Europe, prepared the soil for the seeds of Luther, and not until Luther had gathered his wheat into the garner and burned up the chaff with unquenchable fire did Rome repent of her ways and apply the lesson that Erasmus had taught her.

But the Church that owed in part to him her belated reform disavowed her reformer. The Council of Trent branded as an impious heretic the man who had been the friend and correspondent of popes and prelates and Catholic princes. Neither Rome, nor Wittenberg, nor Geneva could tolerate Erasmus, because Erasmus was the apostle of a tolerance that was not understood by Loyola, Luther, and Calvin. His ideal was an undogmatic Christendom, whose time, however, had not yet come. "I brought it about," he wrote to Maldonado, "that humanism, which among the Italians and especially among the Romans, savored of nothing but pure paganism, began nobly to celebrate Christ, in whom, if we are true Christians, we ought to glory as the one author of both wisdom and happiness." To his temperament the all-important matter in religion was its life. Whatever the solution to the enigma of free choice, in any case man's duty was plain: "If we are in the way of piety, let us hasten on to better things; if involved in sin, let us find the

remedy of repentance." But his age cared more for systematic theology than for religious life. Luther was a true son of the time in asserting the supreme significance of dogmatic questions.

The Emperor Charles, unfortunately, did not see eye to eye with the two greatest men among his fellow Netherlanders. He had inherited from his Burgundian ancestors a policy of anti-French intrigue. Being bent on gaining the support of the Church against the traditional enemy of the Burgundian house he bought the aid of Rome with the surrender of his heretical subjects to the Inquisition. Pope Adrian, during his brief tenure of office, staunchly refused to be made a tool of the emperor's anti-French policy, but his integrity availed him little; it did not change the Vatican's course of action and lost him the favor of his imperial patron. From purely political motives dictated by dynastic considerations Charles V cast in his lot with the Roman hierarchy against the Lutheran revolt. Dürer left Antwerp on July 12, 1521. On the following day Luther's books were publicly burned in front of the city hall, and in October Erasmus packed up his books in Louvain and left the country, which was soon to become the scene of merciless persecution of heretics.

Lutherans were the first victims, but the Wittenberg reformer had few followers in the Netherlands except in Antwerp among the city's German residents and their Dutch acquaintances. The large majority of the martyrs were adherents of another heresy, that of the Anabaptists. This was a movement that sprang from the individualistic tendencies that were astir in all phases of late medieval life. Each Christian, the Anabaptists taught, should be an independent seeker after God. They rejected the priest's mediation between the believer and the Deity, and were opposed to all church organization because it did violence to the integrity of the God-seeking soul. They felt, nevertheless, the urge toward a certain form of cohesion and found it in the

ceremony of baptism, as the early Christians of the New Testament had done. These theories were first formulated in south Germany and Switzerland; but there Anabaptism was practically extinguished by cruel repression. It reached the Netherlands around 1530 and found the soil there prepared for its reception by the activity of the Modern Devotion.

The Anabaptists naïvely believed that the kingdom of God of which Christ had spoken could be realized here and now upon earth. The figurative rhetoric of their prophets was understood by the faithful in its literal sense and lived up to in dead earnest. "Naked and bare" was among the devout the accepted phrase for "free from this world and all its impurity," but simple souls took it literally. One night in February, 1535, seven men and five women of Amsterdam who had met for their devotions in the house of one of them, a respectable cloth merchant, threw their clothes upon the hearth fire and ran naked into the street, scaring the citizens with their shouts of "Woe, woe!" They wanted in physical nakedness to imitate the naked Christ.

The same literalness prompted Jan Matthijsen, a baker from Haarlem, to found the New Jerusalem at Münster, where he trusted that the Lord, on His coming to earth, would receive it from his hand to make it perfect. Under this madman's leadership his following of peaceful pietists turned into a disciplined corps of ruthless fanatics. By way of starting the work of perfection they drove all non-believing Catholics and Lutherans out of the city, and burned all books and manuscripts except the Bible because all human writings had obscured God's Word. They punished the smallest infraction of the laws of God's kingdom by death, seized private property and administered it for the common good, and ordered house doors to be kept open and fences razed so that all private premises should be open to

everybody, for all families were one family united by all-embracing love in the kingdom of God.

Jan Matthijsen was killed when he led a sally from the city, which was besieged by the troops of the Bishop of Münster. His place was taken by another Hollander, Jan Beukelsz, from Leyden, an equally fanatical madman. Like Tanchelm four centuries earlier he believed himself or claimed to be a second Christ and had himself crowned king of Sion. The new king allowed polygamy and took to himself a harem of sixteen wives, chief among whom was the voluptuous widow of Jan Matthijsen. He sent out twenty-six apostles to summon the faithful to the New Jerusalem and to proclaim the glory of his kingdom; but the authorities in the towns that they visited, unimpressed by the glory, had them seized and put to death. Hunger meanwhile began to oppress the beleaguered city. Jan Beukelsz raged with insane fury against all who weakened and would have him surrender the city to the bishop. He even beheaded one of his harem with his own hands. The poor woman was avenged without delay, for two weeks later the enemy took the city, and the king of Sion's crazy structure collapsed like a house of cards. The Anabaptists were exterminated as so much vermin, and the dead bodies of Jan Beukelsz and his aides were hung up in iron cages on the tower of St. Lambert's church.

This Münster episode formed a gruesome interlude in the progress of a movement that was essentially of a deeply religious nature. Jan Beukelsz was its evil genius. He was a man of great gifts but unbalanced mind. He probably believed in his divine mission and by the power of his magnetic eloquence made his followers, to their undoing, believe in it, too. Hell-bent for heaven on earth, he carried the simple souls he led astray to their doom.

The atrocities committed in the New Jerusalem at Münster

explain the cruelty with which the Anabaptists everywhere were persecuted. They bore the brunt of the Inquisition. The confessions and last letters of the martyrs were collected and published in print in 1562 under the title *Het Offer des Heeren, The Sacrifice of the Lord*. The book contains convincing evidence that these people were not criminals in the guise of religious zealots. In self-imposed defenselessness they chose to follow in the steps of the Prince of Peace. The later history of the movement is identified with the person of Menno Simons, a preacher who organized his followers into a quiet, undogmatic sect, withdrawn from the world and walking in the straight and narrow path that leads to God.

The Anabaptist uprising was not the social revolt of an impoverished proletariat. The records of the courts that examined and sentenced them to death make it clear that they came from all classes of society; scholars, rich merchants, and noblemen appeared in the dock by the side of simple burghers from the lower classes. It was a genuinely religious exaltation that drove these devout individualists to their destruction. There was indeed in the early thirties much suffering among the urban poor, and it may well be that the promise of the coming of the kingdom of God which Jan Beukelsz held out to his followers made a special appeal to these unfortunates, but physical well-being was not their goal; they hoped for salvation in Jesus Christ.

The economic crisis of the early thirties was brought on by the influx of silver and gold from America. Spain was not an industrial workshop but employed the Netherlands to supply her with the necessities of life. Most of the bullion that she imported from the New World was drained off to the Low Countries, where the factories and home industries were humming to satisfy Spanish orders. Hence Dutch prosperity rose by leaps and bounds and greater wealth created a demand for all sorts

of commodities that were luxuries a generation earlier. With the purchasing power steadily rising, the supply became at last inadequate. Then prices were forced up by the scarcity of goods and finally they skyrocketed in the thirties. "I hear," wrote a Dutch exile from Norwich in England, "that one buys more here for a stiver than one can get for three at Ypres."

The working class meanwhile became poorer and poorer, for the prosperity benefited only the employer class. The factory and shop workers received no raise in wages and felt all the more destitute by the contrast between their indigence and the excessive wealth of the capitalists. Discontent and riots were the natural outcome of social inequality. The High Court of Holland reported in alarm to the King's Regent at Brussels: "The poor on account of the decline of trade are eager to share with the rich and lay the country desolate." It was not decline of trade, though, that made the poor rebellious but the failure of the rich employers to let the workers share in the benefits of the boom.

Relief of the poor was the task of many medieval agencies. The parish church, the monasteries, the mendicant orders, especially the Minorites, the *beguinages*, and various privately endowed foundations performed the seven works of charity: clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, giving the thirsty to drink, freeing prisoners, sheltering the homeless, comforting the sick, burying the dead. But it was done haphazardly and, since it was a prescribed religious duty, it was discharged all too often in a perfunctory manner. Beggars were given alms, but the social evils that made them beggars were never attacked. Beggary was a tonic to the morale of the rich and the well-to-do; it spurred their generosity and made them feel virtuous. The thought that it should and could be suppressed never occurred to the medieval community. The poor were an essential part of

it, and almsgiving was an essential part of Christian conduct.

We saw that King Louis XI admired the prosperity of town and country in the Netherlands, but it should not be inferred from his praises that poverty and beggary were not in evidence in the Low Countries. They were so common a feature of European society everywhere that their appearance among the Dutch could not detract from the impression of general well-being; on the contrary, they acted as a foil to it. Christ's word that the poor will always be with us induced a resigned acceptance of poverty as an ineradicable part of the divine dispensation.

In the early sixteenth century a deliberate attempt was made to depart from this lethargic do-nothing policy. The great humanist Juan Luis Vives formulated a plan for municipally organized relief in a Latin letter addressed to the city councillors of Bruges. Vives was born at Valencia in Spain, but he spent the last fifteen years of his life as a resident and burgher of that Flemish city. He felt bound to it, he wrote to the city fathers, by ties no less strong than those that attached him to his native Valencia. Bruges, he said, was his second fatherland, and whenever he left it for a sojourn abroad, he always returned to it as his home. "I like the equity of your government, the education and courtesy of your burghers, the matchless tranquillity among you, and your justice celebrated among the nations."

Vives had studied in Paris, had lived in Oxford, had acted as tutor of Princess Mary at the court of King Henry VIII, but he preferred the quiet, ordered life in the Netherlands. Yet not everything was well in the rich city of Bruges. He described with outspoken realism the disgusting spectacle of the poor and the sick who, at the church festivals, congregated in the portals of the city churches. Is it fitting, he asked, that women and children, young girls and old men, should have to enter the



sanctuary between a double line of these wretches, whose cancerous and ulcerous sores offend not only their eyesight but also their sense of smell? How dangerous to let them mingle with the crowd and spread the infection of their ills among the healthy. It is sad mismanagement to allow so large a part of the population to remain useless and even become harmful to the community. If these castaways were taken proper care of they might be cured and set to work; but the Church has fallen down on its task. The bishop does not consider these mangy sheep to belong to his fold; and the lesser clergy do not minister to the faithful who cannot pay for the slightest service.

Vives therefore appealed to the municipal government to take the initiative toward reform. His proposals found favor with the magistrates of the city of Ypres. In conjunction with the Church authorities they set up an over-all organization in which the relief work of city, Church, and private foundations was centralized under the management of a board of eight wardens. These made a census of all the destitute in the city, they ordered an inspection and thorough clean-up of the hospitals, founded schools where the children of the poor were taught free of charge, and administered the common treasury into which the various agencies for poor relief had merged their funds. The plan worked so well that Charles V demanded a report on this radical departure from medieval practice. Impressed by the information he received, he proclaimed a poor law for all his lands that embodied the essential features of the Ypres setup.

The reform came too late. The unrest and social disruption caused by the persecution of heretics interfered with the nationwide organization of poor relief according to the Ypres model. All through the later years of Charles' reign the sense of insecurity and impending disaster had an unsettling effect upon every urban community. The well-to-do who sympathized with

some heretical doctrines broke up their homes and sought safety abroad; and even the poor scraped their scant savings together and chose freedom of faith in exile rather than remain under the terror of the Inquisition at home.

England was the favorite place of refuge. London and the towns along the east and south coasts swarmed with refugees from the Low Countries in the fifties and sixties. They were the most numerous colony of aliens. According to the census of 1567 there were 4851 foreigners living in London, of whom 3838 were Dutch.

Among them was a former citizen of Antwerp by the name of Jacob van Meteren, a merchant of ample means and the father of a son called Emanuel, who became famous as a historian. When the latter was in his seventy-fifth year he made a deposition in London on May 28, 1609, to the effect that "he was brought in England Anno 1550, in King Edward VI's dayes, by his Father, a furtherer of reformed religion and he that caused the first Bible at his costes to be Englisshed by Mr. Myles Coverdal in Andwarp." In the *Life of Emanuel van Meteren* appended to the Hague edition of his *History of the Wars and Events of the Dutch and Their Neighbors* it is said of the historian's father that "he had learned in his youth the noble art of printing, he was endowed with the knowledge of various languages and other useful sciences, and knew to distinguish the light from darkness, showing himself especially zealous in financing and printing of the English Bible in Antwerp, for which purpose he employed the service of a learned student named Miles Coverdal, to the great advancement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ in England."

There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of these statements. Both father and son were men of high moral character. Those early Protestants kept a strict watch over their consciences, and

Jacob would not have burdened his with the sin of boastfully inventing such a story. Coverdale himself said that "the Holy Goost moued other men to do the cost hereof." Van Meteren probably collected contributions among the Reformed in Antwerp, but since he took the initiative we may be sure that he felt himself in duty bound to bear the chief cost of the enterprise.

Coverdale had good reasons for not mentioning Jacob van Meteren's name. The Antwerp magistrates were lenient toward heretics but the central government at Brussels treated them severely; and Van Meteren, who often had to leave the city on business, would not have been safe from arrest if he had been proclaimed in bold print a propagandist of the Bible in the vernacular.

The tragic story of Tyndale's wanderings and final days at Antwerp shows to what dangers the enthusiasts for a national Bible exposed themselves. Tyndale had hoped to persuade Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London, to sponsor his translation of the New Testament. But he found, as he said, "not only that there was no room in the Bishop's house for him to translate the New Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England." He went to Hamburg, where he completed his translation, and took it to Cologne to have it published there; but when ten quires had been printed off, a baiter of Lutherans persuaded the magistrates of Cologne to put a stop to the publication. To escape arrest Tyndale fled to Worms, and it was there that his New Testament saw the light. Copies were selling in England in the spring of 1526.

On October 23 of that year the Bishop of London proclaimed a prohibition of the book and ordered the archdeacons of his diocese to call in all copies, threatening those who failed to deliver them with excommunication and the suspicion of heresy. In spite of the episcopal ban the English testaments were selling

the next year at a price that was sufficiently high to make the reprinting of it an attractive venture. Pirated editions were published in Antwerp and smuggled into England in large quantities. Wolsey, thereupon, sent a confidential agent, John Hacket, to the Netherlands to investigate the provenance of the heretical Bibles and to plead with the authorities for the punishment of the printers. Hacket found in Margaret of Savoy, the Regent of the Netherlands on behalf of the absent King of Spain, a sympathetic listener to his complaint, but she and her Privy Council could not prevail upon the magistrates of Antwerp to prosecute the guilty printers. The city fathers refused to pass judgment upon books they could not read. If the plaintiff would supply them with a translation of the book under censure in either Latin or Dutch, they would be willing to give the matter due consideration. Hacket indignantly asked whether the testimony of His Majesty, the King of England, was not sufficient evidence against the printers, but was told that "it is as great reason that the Judges of these countries ought as well to know what they shall judge here as the Judges of your country know what they judge there," an answer that virtually repeated the argument of the printer's attorney that "the Emperor's subjects should not be judged by the laws of other countries."

The printer whom the city authorities thus screened from the wrath of the London government was Christoffel van Enthoven, also known as Christoffel van Roermond. He was one of many Dutch printers who supplied English books to the London market. They kept agents over there who had stalls and shops in the neighborhood of St. Paul's and travelers who visited the various provincial fairs. This English book trade of the Dutch printers was not interfered with by the government in London. They enjoyed the protection of an English act of 1484, which regulated and restricted the conditions under which aliens

might carry on business within the realm, but exempted from these all foreign scribes, illuminators, bookbinders, and printers. William Caxton, who had learned the art of printing in the Netherlands, remained for a long time the only master of the craft in England, and that explains the liberality of the act of 1484 which gave foreign printers untrammelled freedom. They were left in full enjoyment of it for fifty years. After 1534 it was no longer legal to import printed books ready-bound or to buy from a foreigner residing in England any books except wholesale. But as long as the open market lasted, the Dutch printers made the most of the opportunity and shipped every year great quantities of books packed in barrels to their agents in London.

Christoffel van Enthoven, misled by the ease with which his agent disposed of Tyndale's forbidden New Testaments, committed the error, in 1531, of going across to London to conduct the sale of the books in person. He was promptly seized, thrown into prison at Westminster, and died in his cell. His death, however, did not stop the supply. A new edition of 1534, the fourth reprint, was distributed in two thousand copies. Tyndale, meanwhile, made a revision of his text and brought it out in November of the same year from the press of the Antwerp printer, Martin de Keyser; and a second revision, also printed at Antwerp by another member of the craft, proved that the demand for his translation was widespread among the English people.

In that same year Tyndale himself came to grief. He had been living in the house of the English merchants at Antwerp under the protection of the city magistrates. In May he ventured beyond the city walls, was arrested by officers of the central government at Brussels, and strangled at the stake in the prison at Vilvoorden on the sixth of October, 1536. It is clear from his fate that Jacob van Meteren staked much more than his money

on the printing of Coverdale's Bible. He risked his very life in the enterprise. When he settled in London fifteen years later he must have thanked the Holy Ghost for "moving him to the cost thereof." For the book was instrumental in winning England for the Reformed religion and making it a haven of refuge for thousands of his compatriots. In the protection she offered them England repaid the debt she owed Van Meteren for his support of Miles Coverdale.

## CHAPTER V

### HOLLAND TO THE FORE

ERASMUS DIED at Basel in 1536, and in that same year and in that same city there came from the press of Thomas Platter and Balthasar Lasius an anonymous publication in Latin that was destined to serve as a guide and a rallying cry to all Christians who protested against the policies and the corrupt practices of the Church of Rome. Its author was a youthful Frenchman, barely twenty-six years old, and his name was John Calvin. The book was dedicated to King Francis I. His Majesty was as anxious as his rival, Charles V, to stem the rising tide of heresy; but while persecuting the Protestants in France he tried to keep on good terms with the Protestant princes in Germany, as he needed their help against the emperor. The recent excesses of the Anabaptists at Münster served his purpose: he had his ambassador at the imperial court assure the German Protestants that his drive against heresy was directed exclusively against the Anabaptists and such sects as opposed all civil magistracy. Calvin resented this misrepresentation as a calumny cast upon the Protestant cause in France, and he wrote his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* "that I might vindicate from unjust affront my brethren whose death was precious in the sight of the Lord."

Charles V, in his fear of France, had sacrificed his heretical subjects to gain the support of Rome, but the sacrifice proved in vain; for his son and successor, who persevered in his policies

with a vengeance, was to witness the conquest of his Dutch possessions by the triumph of Calvinism, which, more irresistible than any French army, successfully invaded the Netherlands in the fifties and sixties. The Inquisition had raged with futile vindictiveness against the harmless sect of Menno Simons, whose quiet, self-effacing Baptists offered no threat to the established powers. Calvinism, on the other hand, proved a belligerent force that carried all before it. It won adherents first in the Walloon border regions in the south and spread from there through Flanders and Brabant into the northern provinces. Its democratic church organization appealed to the Dutch: church authority emanating from the congregation, which exercised it through its chosen representatives, the elders; the minister a spiritual ruler not by virtue of any magical influence transmitted from the apostles but by virtue of his election by the church that appoints him in the name of Jesus Christ, he being not a mediator between men and God but a preacher on behalf of the one and only mediator, the Lord Jesus.

The acclaim Calvin's doctrine received in the Netherlands was a challenge to the Catholic sovereign that was not to be tolerated. Philip II, who by this time had succeeded his father, Charles V, in all his high dignities except as German emperor, was determined to stamp out this new rebellion against the faith he was sworn to defend. Tens of thousands fled the country with the connivance of the native authorities. The choice of the place of refuge was determined by its accessibility: fugitives from Antwerp and Flanders fled to England, those from the eastern Low Countries to the Rhine province and Cologne, and the exodus from the northern provinces was directed to Emden in East Friesland. In each of these places they joined the settlements of co-religionists who had found refuge there during the previous decades.



The exiles in Emden, in order to give cohesion and discipline to the dispersed, started a Dutch Reformed Church in exile and adopted Calvin's presbyterian polity. The minister, elders, and deacons of each congregation were to form a governing board called the consistory which was to hold a meeting once a week. Delegates from the congregations within a given area formed the classes, whose approval of a minister's call by a consistory was needed. And representatives of all the classes formed the synod, the final authority in matters of organization and discipline.

Emden thus became the cradle of the Dutch Reformed Church, which was to give leadership to the Protestants at home and in the dispersal. The former, though suppressed and persecuted, were not inactive. They held conventicles in barns and fields at a safe distance from the cities and listened to sermons and Scripture lessons and sang from their psalmbooks at the risk of their lives. The highest nobility of the land, all Knights of the Golden Fleece and as such entitled to give counsel to the absent ruler, sent petitions to King Philip in Madrid for cessation of the heresy hunt. They knew the temper of the masses better than His Majesty, who as a foreigner did not, like his father, command the affection and loyalty of the Dutch. Stubbornly refusing all compromise, he insisted on the utmost severity in the treatment of all who were caught in the nets of the Inquisition. At last, one summer day in 1566, the people's patience broke under the strain of their suffering; in an access of mass fury they broke into the churches and vented their hatred of Rome and popery on the images of the saints and the visible symbols of Roman worship. The riots started at Antwerp and rapidly spread through all the Low Countries. In a few days the accumulated art of several centuries was wantonly destroyed and lost forever.

The outrage made compromise impossible. King Philip would not relent, the Calvinists would not repent. If the king had been a better diplomat and less of a fanatic in religious matters, he might have saved the situation by relying on the people's innate love of order to restore it themselves. Instead, he resorted to more cruel persecution and sent the Duke of Alva to rule the Low Countries with an iron fist. Until then, women had been regents there for the absent sovereign; under Charles V, his widowed sister Mary, Queen-dowager of Hungary; under Philip II, his step-sister Margaret, Duchess of Parma. Now a hard-hearted general was to take the latter's place, not to govern the free Netherlands as the sovereign's representative but as his executioner to crush them under his heel and turn them into a slavish dependency of Spain. The Dutch people, not heretics alone but faithful Catholics as well, were driven by his merciless tyranny to revolt, and thus began the Spanish war that was to last for eighty years.

When William I, Prince of Orange, assumed the leadership of the uprising, he had no intention of founding a new state. He resisted the encroachments of Madrid upon the government at Brussels and claimed for the Netherlands Knights of the Golden Fleece, among whom he held first rank, paramount influence over native affairs. The burghers had reasons of their own for resenting Spanish rule. King Philip, consistently pursuing the course steered by his Burgundian ancestors, strove to unite the bewildering diversity of duchies, counties, seigneuries that constituted the Netherlands into a closely knit, centralized state. The Dutch people, on the other hand, clung to their local and provincial rights and privileges. Their resistance was prompted by the wish to preserve medieval variety from being merged in uniformity. Under Charles V, a native prince of the Netherlands who spoke the people's language and often resided

among them, criticism of his measures never rose above a murmur of discontent; but Dutch conservatism refused to accept the centralized administration imposed by a foreign ruler. Popular resentment, however, would not have gathered strength for successful resistance if it had not been fired by religious zeal. It was the inhuman persecution of heretics that turned political and economic discontent into armed rebellion.

Democratic Calvinism was the militant force that liberated the Netherlands. The Knights of the Golden Fleece, realizing that they had unchained forces which threatened their own power no less than that of the sovereign, abandoned the cause of the rebels and submitted again to their liege lord. Prince William of Orange alone decided otherwise, and in that decision he showed his greatness. He stood by the Calvinist insurrectionists, not because he liked Geneva better than Rome, but because he realized that freedom for his Dutch people could be won only with the aid of the zealots of the Reformed religion. The proud Knight of the Golden Fleece, forsaken by his equals, was henceforth the rebel leader of despised heretics.

These bitterest foes of Spain and Rome were the iconoclasts of 1566, the men who had suffered for their Calvinist faith and wanted to pay off old scores with popery. They had taken to the sea, which offered them freedom and a means of subsistence by piracy. On the water the Spaniards were at their mercy. Alva's land forces consisted of foreign mercenaries; for the crews of his navy, on the other hand, only Hollanders and Zeelanders were available, and these would rather serve the Prince of Orange than the King of Spain. These Sea Beggars, as they were called, carrying letters of marque from the prince, terrorized the towns along the coasts of Holland and Zeeland whose magistrates remained loyal to the King of Spain, and they came to the support of those that declared themselves for the prince.

The citizenry that called them in did not make common cause with them out of hatred of Rome. The burghers were prompted by other reasons. They were anxious to escape payment of a ten per cent sales tax imposed by Alva and to ward off the Spanish garrison which Alva threatened to quarter on those towns that resisted the levy. The Sea Beggars could help them defy the dreaded tax collector; but the burghers, having turned patriot for economy's sake, often had reason to rue their pact with the pirates; for as soon as these were in control of the town, the agreement under which they had guaranteed safety for the Catholic religion and the lives of the Roman clergy was treated as a scrap of paper. Churches and monasteries were despoiled, priests and monks murdered, and ardent Catholics among the magistrates expelled to make place for the Calvinists returned from exile. The revolt assumed the character of a civil war.

The Sea Beggars were not aware that they were fighting for any ulterior purpose. Desperation and lust for revenge egged them on and, blinded by their passionate hatred of Spain and the Inquisition, their vision was dimmed to the possible outcome of the guerrilla war they were fighting on the high seas. They claimed to serve the Prince of Orange, but they served him as he did not wish to be served. He wanted freedom for the Netherlands, as they did, from Spanish rule; but freedom also from civil strife and religious dissension. They aided in clearing Holland and Zeeland of Spanish troops, but their rabid anti-popery alienated the Catholic burghers from the fight for liberty and jeopardized the future of a free Netherland. Yet the prince was aware that he could not attain the final goal without their support, as they alone were able to keep a stranglehold on Spain's sea-borne commerce. He finally succeeded in curbing their worst excesses but at the price of his ideal of tolerance. The Catholic believer's conscience, it was agreed, would not be coerced, but the

right to open exercise of his religion was denied him in Holland and Zeeland. The Calvinists, in denying it, lacked the courage of honesty. They did not expressly claim a monopoly for their own faith, but piously pretended that only concern for the maintenance of public order constrained them to the suppression of Roman worship. And since the medieval churches were no longer of any use to the unreformed faithful, all church properties were confiscated by the municipal authorities and made available for Calvinist services.

This church revolution was a meek surrender to the dictation of a small but aggressive minority. The Calvinists alone possessed the armed might to impose their will upon their defenseless fellow citizens. Reliable figures are not available, but there is ground for assuming that at the time of the Prince of Orange's death in 1584 the Catholics outnumbered the Calvinists about ten to one. The successful outcome of the revolt tended to even up that inequality. Waverers saw wisdom in siding with the powerful minority, and lukewarm Catholics with political ambitions left the Mother Church in hope of joining the city fathers. Even so, the Catholics were never reduced to a negligible minority, and they still constitute fully one-third of the present-day population of the Netherlands.

The triumph of the rebels in Holland and Zeeland was a signal success for the Prince of Orange. The renegades from the Church of Rome were now ensconced in two provinces that formed a natural water fortress, which, after the relief of Leyden in 1575, was free for good of Spanish occupation troops. It was the stronghold from which Prince William hoped to spearhead his drive for the liberation of all the Netherlands.

There was one moment when he thought that the goal of a free confederacy of all the Low Countries was actually within sight. That was in 1576, at the signing of a peace treaty between

Holland and Zeeland and the other provinces represented in the States General. This treaty, the Pacification of Ghent so-called, provided that all the provinces would unite their best efforts to expel the Spanish troops, and that all matters of general interest, including that of religion, would be taken up in a meeting of the States General to be convened as soon as peace had been restored, when a new church order for all the provinces, Holland and Zeeland not excepted, would be enacted.

It was a paper document that did not voice a reality nor ever called one into action. There was jealousy and suspicion between the signatories and dissension about the meaning and extent of their undertakings. Holland and Zeeland, now feeling themselves the equals of Brabant and Flanders, were afraid lest the latter should regain the supremacy that had been theirs in the past. The Prince of Orange, the chief promotor of the Pacification, was distrusted by the leading noblemen of Brussels, his peers and erstwhile friends, who saw in him a dangerous radical, the idol of heretical rabble. The Catholics in the south, seeing how their co-religionists in Holland and Zeeland had been reduced to second-class citizens of a Calvinist commonwealth, felt ill at ease in a federation in which those two played a leading role. And into this tangle of jealousies, suspicions, and distrusts an additional cause of confusion was injected: the antagonism between the Walloon and the Dutch languages. The Walloons, predominantly Catholic, were not inclined to follow the lead of heretical countrymen whose fellowship they did not welcome in any case on account of their unintelligible speech. Excesses and atrocities committed by the Calvinists in Ghent and other towns of Flanders intensified the aloofness of the French-speaking provinces, where the vested interests, the rural nobility, and the city patricians were determined to retain their authority. Preferring maintenance of the Catholic religion to freedom from

foreign rule, the Walloon provinces — Artois, Hainaut, and French Flanders — made their peace with the King of Spain in 1579.

The Prince of Orange, seeing his Pacification of Ghent disintegrate, decided to make the water stronghold of Holland and Zeeland the nucleus of a smaller but more solid union. It came into being in a meeting at Utrecht of delegates from Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, and the rural areas — not the city — of Groningen. The States of Gelderland remained aloof, but the prince's brother, Count Jan van Nassau, who was stadtholder of that province, signed the document on their behalf. The contracting parties united for a negative purpose: common resistance against the Spanish menace. They claimed to form forever one indivisible province; but perpetuity cannot be built on so shaky a foundation. They were not prompted to the merger by a common desire to be one nation, they were conscious only of the wish not to be subject to a foreign one. The Union of Utrecht turned out to be the cornerstone of the Dutch Republic, but the negative character of its genesis proved a cause of chronic weakness.

Prince William withheld his fiat for a couple of months. He had seen and approved the first draft of the document, which did not contain anything that might alarm the Catholics, but into its final form a provision had been inserted that expressly recognized the monopoly of Calvinism in Holland and Zeeland. His constant endeavors to make Calvinists and Catholics collaborate were frustrated anew; but realizing that the best remained beyond his grasp, he made a virtue of necessity and put his signature to the treaty.

The constituents of the Union of Utrecht had taken good care to state that it was not their intention to secede from the Pacification of Ghent, and the Prince of Orange, whose headquarters were at Antwerp at this time, never lost contact with the assem-

bly of the States General. These, at the instigation of the prince, decided at last to declare themselves in open revolt against their sovereign. They had worn thus far the masks of loyal subjects, pretending to resist not their liege lord but his misguided administrators and undisciplined soldiers. On July 22, 1581, the States General, assembled at The Hague, declared Philip II deposed on account of his tyranny and his utter disregard of the Netherlands' charters and privileges. A prince of the land, they declared, is appointed by God to rule his subjects even as a shepherd keeps his sheep; the subjects are not created by God for the benefit of the prince. If then the shepherd proves a tyrant, the subjects have a natural right to depose him, the more so when no other means is left to preserve their native freedom.

It was the bold application of a doctrine that was generally held in the medieval communes of the Low Countries. The great charter of Brabant which each new duke, on his festive entry into Brussels, had to swear to uphold and which, on that account, was known by the name of "Joyous Entry," conceived of the duke's authority as being based on a contract with his subjects, which, if broken by him, gave the burghers the right to disown him. The theory had its root in feudalism, which was, in essence, a reciprocity of commitments: the lord guaranteed protection, the vassal service. But that tie was broken when the protector turned tyrant; his breach of contract released the vassal from the duty of service. Some medieval theorists went even farther and taught that the faithless lord deserved to lose not only his subjects' loyalty but his very life. Jan van Boendale, who was for more than forty years secretary of the city of Antwerp, told his countrymen in his didactic poem, *Laymen's Mirror*, that the sovereign owed his power to the people who made him lord to keep the peace among them according to the laws they had given him to rule by; that he himself was subject to these laws and, if



he should break them and rob his people of life and possessions, he would deserve death. That was written early in the fourteenth century, more than three hundred years before the English turned the theory to bitter earnest.

The denial of the sovereign's right to his power was an empty gesture if it was not accompanied by deeds that actually took it away from him. The King of Spain had still an army in the Netherlands outside Holland and Zeeland, and a general in command who combined military skill with diplomatic dexterity. Alessandro Farnese, Duke of Parma, turning the Catholics' distrust of Calvinist aims to good account, approached the vested interests in the southern Netherlands with dire warnings against the heretics and fair promises of royal forgiveness and favor. Town after town lent willing ear to his blandishments, to which he added persuasive force by military operations which he carried out with signal success. Even Antwerp, chief stronghold of Calvinist resistance, surrendered after a protracted siege in 1585. And Parma, unlike Alva, did not jeopardize the conquests he made by barbaric measures of revenge. Catholicism, it is true, was the only religion he allowed, but the Calvinists in the areas he occupied were given the choice between recanting their heresy or departing into exile. Inquisition and torture were terrors of the past. No atonement for doctrinal errors was exacted except their disavowal and attendance at mass. Only Calvinist zealots could not make peace with their sovereign on those terms. The large majority of the burghers gladly accepted them, thankful to see order restored at last. Thus the entire region south of the Scheldt and the Maas was lost to the cause of Dutch freedom. The Prince of Orange withdrew to his maritime stronghold in the north, and there, in 1584, in his residence at Delft, he fell as a sacrifice to that cause by the hand of an assassin of King Philip.

The story of his life is a tragic tale of frustrated hope and indomitable perseverance in spite of repeated setbacks and failures. The Dutch Republic that emerged from the struggle was, to his deep regret, but a fragment of the territory once called the Burgundian Netherlands. The successes of Parma had brought about a cleavage between provinces that in the early sixteenth century had seemed predestined for national unity. The county of Flanders and the duchy of Brabant south of the Scheldt and the Maas, the counties of Holland and Zeeland north of these rivers, formed two political units whose urban industries and sea-borne commerce, the common sources of their prosperity, were a strong inducement to cooperation. It was not incompatibility that divorced Hollanders and Zeelanders from Brabanters and Flemings. Geography and military strategy account for it. The Dutch Republic arose behind the natural moats that prevented Parma from extending his conquests farther north. Owing to the expulsion of all Calvinists from the territory recovered by Parma, the southern provinces remained a Catholic country, whereas the Dutch Republic became a predominantly Protestant area. For a brief period after the fall of Napoleon, from 1815 to 1839, the northern and southern Low Countries were reunited; but Netherland and Belgium, as they are called today, persist by force of tradition and adverse circumstances in their reciprocal aloofness.

Prince William did not witness the security won by the Dutch Republic. Its cornerstone was laid at Utrecht in 1579, but the building was still in course of construction at the time of his death. Its architects did not work from blueprints; they were not even clear in their own minds what kind of structure they were erecting. For a long time they envisaged a possible future in which the united provinces would carry on as before, with

this difference only: that instead of the King of Spain some other foreign monarch, the King of France or the Queen of England, would be the sovereign to whom their union should owe allegiance. Eventually, in 1609, they signed as a free people, not owing allegiance to anyone, a twelve years' truce with the King of Spain they had forsworn. The latter did not formally recognize their independence but nevertheless negotiated with them "as if they were a free and sovereign state."

A young nobleman from France called Jean Louis Guez de Balzac, a name he was destined to make illustrious by the brilliance of his prose style, was studying in Leyden at the time. In youthful enthusiasm he wrote a dithyrambic essay on Dutch freedom that shows evidence both of his literary genius and of the wonder that struck contemporaries at the spectacle of Spain's humiliation.

*This is the great book [he wrote] of the judgments of God which He has opened in these latter days that we may read with trembling of the powers of the earth which shall see a usurper of realms lose his patrimony. He who had made himself master of the other world without the thrust of a dagger could not hold on to a small corner of this one, and the great Philip who wore the crowns of so many kings was divested of his shirt by his own subjects. One would not believe such a thing possible in another century. He used more gold than he had land to conquer, and it seems that he had more men on his side only to have more dead. His very successes did not succeed. For if he had not caused the death of the Prince of Orange, he would not have felt so soon as he did the effects of the skillful leadership and courage of the Prince's son,\* whom he made general to his cost and sooner than was good for his own interests. He got rid of the*

\* Prince Maurice, whose brilliant campaigns freed the territory of the Republic from the Spanish troops.

head, but two arms yet remained to beat him: two princes born in armour and trained in warfare, of whom the younger one\* fully deserved to take command if his brother did not deserve it even better. These take his best cities from him while he stubbornly refuses to abandon a cemetery and squanders money and men to gain the ruins of a city devoid of both. The Dutch people showed in the battle of Nieuwpoort that they knew how to kill, and they proved in that siege that they knew how to die. They defended Ostend until it was no more than the spot on which it had stood. They had enough ground on which to fight so long as they had enough to be buried in; and if they had enough for their feet to stand on, their hands never failed to defend it. The Spaniard, finally, did not take the city, but they left it to him; and in losing it they gained as much as the other lost by gaining it. The latter began to feel annoyed at having taken trouble to gain dishonor, at being still where he began forty years earlier and at having exerted himself for accomplishing nothing. It was better, therefore, to call a halt and be the first to lay down arms, just as he had been the first to raise them. His generals served him better in swing for peace than in making war. He sent them to the Hollanders not in order to force them into service but to beg them to be satisfied with their liberty. He recognized them as sovereigns, being unable to make them slaves. He gave them what he could not take from them, and was forced, while treating with them, to baptize their government with the name of sovereign Republic and be its godfather after having been its enemy.

Holland and Zeeland were now the superiors of Brabant and Flanders. They closed the Scheldt and blockaded the Flemish coast, thus choking off the sea-borne commerce of the southern provinces; and since under continued Spanish rule the centralization of all administrative functions went on unchecked, the

\* Prince Frederik Hendrik, who was to succeed Maurice as stadtholder and lieutenant.

cities and provinces in the south lost their autonomy and with it that proud spirit of independence that had given impetus to civic enterprise in the past. Amsterdam superseded Antwerp as the chief metropolis of northern Europe and became the center of Netherlands civilization.

Those who have never lived in Amsterdam cannot know what the city means to its natives. They take a pride in her that springs from various sources: the beauty of her architecture, the greatness of her history, the world-wide expansion of her commerce, her undisputed rank of first city of the land, her hospitality to the victims of foreign persecution, her leadership in liberalism and the democratic way of life. She is not the most ancient among her sisters. Amsterdam grew in the late Middle Ages from a straggling fishing village at the confluence of the Amstel and the Y into a prosperous port and market town. By the end of the fifteenth century it must have been a very wealthy community. When the Emperor Maximilian was seized and imprisoned by the rebellious citizens of Bruges, and other parts of the Netherlands were causing him no end of trouble, the city on the Amstel assisted him with money and ships. He was never able to repay Amsterdam what he owed her but showed his gratitude with a present that cost him nothing and made the people of Amsterdam inordinately proud. He gave them the right to surmount the city's escutcheon with the imperial crown. They felt themselves amply repaid. The glory that this privilege won for Amsterdam gave her distinction among her older and rival sisters.

During the first decade of the war with Spain the city remained loyal to Philip II. The Catholic families that were in power within its walls remembered the excesses committed by Anabaptists and Adamites and were determined to guard their city against such unruly elements. A rival faction in which both

Catholic and Protestant families were represented opposed them not for their loyalty to the Mother Church but for their indifference to the cause of political freedom. The Sea Beggars, who were masters on the Zuider Zee, paralyzed the city's trade; the merchants grumbled, the dock workers could not find employment, the tradespeople saw their custom dwindle, and agents of the Prince of Orange found good fishing in these troubled waters. In 1578 the opposition went into action. They seized the magistracy and escorted them to the city moat where they were placed on barges and transported to the other bank to go where they pleased except back into the city. It was a bloodless revolution, which sent the deposed rulers unharmed into exile. The Spaniards lost in Amsterdam their chief stronghold in the north, and the new city government, predominantly Calvinist, inaugurated a new era of energetic action and phenomenal prosperity.

After the turn of the century the city rapidly expanded. Its oldest part, the Dam, a short distance from the confluence of the Amstel and the Y, became the hub of a widening circle of concentric, crescent-shaped canals that were lined with magnificent mansions, the homes of rich patricians. First came the Singel, that is, the girdle, the original moat of the medieval town. Then followed the first ring of the seventeenth-century expansion, the Heerengracht, the canal of the Mijneheers, who built their homes along this outer edge away from the bustle and noise of the business center. Then came the Keizersgracht, or Emperor's Canal, the name being an expression of the citizens' pride in the imperial crown surmounting Amsterdam's coat of arms. Next the Prinsengracht described a still larger semicircle around this threefold belt of canals, thus christened, of course, in honor of the Prince of Orange.

These four great thoroughfares are still the chief pride of modern Amsterdam. They were the marvel of Europe in the

seventeenth century. It was a city built on an inverted pine forest, for each house had to be underpinned with long piles made of Scandinavian pine trees, which were driven into the soggy soil. The Dutch had learned by bitter experience that no other foundation could sustain their city of brick and mortar.

The city's prosperity and the hospitality offered to all comers attracted tens of thousands of aliens. Amsterdam was a European melting pot. French and Walloon Huguenots, English non-conformists, German Lutherans, Portuguese Jews, Armenian Christians, found shelter within its walls under the tolerant rule of the burgomasters. Amsterdam's international commerce and its multifarious industries could utilize this immigrant labor. Other towns, though, were also open for their reception and developed their old-established handicrafts with the aid of these foreign workers: Haarlem the manufacture of linens, Leyden of silks and woollens, Delft of ceramics. Alien labor helped to enrich the country in return for its hospitality.

The second generation of these immigrants felt themselves to be Dutchmen. Even those who had come over in groups and continued to live in isolation from their Dutch environment could not escape the imperceptible process of assimilation. Among the reasons that induced the English refugees in Leyden to sail for an English colony in America was the fear, said William Bradford, that their children would forget their English speech. The Briton's supposed inability to learn foreign languages is only a pose that he assumed, in his insular pride, in the days of Samuel Johnson. "Foreigners are fools," said the learned doctor; why then should speakers of the King's English try to imitate the speech of foolish foreigners? But in the days of Queen Elizabeth and the Stuarts the English had not yet affected that supercilious contempt for everything outlandish. Richard Carew boasted in *The Excellency of the English Tongue*

of his countrymen's proficiency in other languages. "Turne ann Englishmann," he wrote, "at any time of his age into what country soever, allowing him dew respite, and you shall see him perfitt soe well that the Imitation of his utterance will in nothing differ from the patterne of that native Languadge." That the English of his day were actually eager to study foreign languages is attested by Jacob Walraven, a Dutch merchant who in the eighties of the sixteenth century published an English primer for Dutch students. According to him the English and the Dutch were the only people in Europe who, when traveling abroad, did not expect to be served and obeyed in their own speech.

Both men, of course, had the educated Briton in mind and not the unlettered type that made up the rank and file of John Robinson's congregation at Leyden. It is clear, however, from the records which the so-called Pilgrim Fathers left behind in the Leyden archives that the educated among them were not immune to the naturalizing process. Their minister, John Robinson, when asked for his name by the registrar of marriages, called himself Jan Roberts, while his wife, on the same occasion, gave hers as Britsit Robbens, thus unwittingly disowning the marriage tie. It is only natural that she should be more conservative than the minister. As leader of his foreign flock he came into daily contact with the Dutch, while Bridget must have limited her conversation to the small circle of her English friends and gossips. But eighteen years later, when Mrs. Robinson, then a widow, married her daughter and namesake to John Greenwood, both women had their Christian name registered as Brechgen, the Dutch equivalent of Bridget in the diminutive. Roger Chandler, another member of Robinson's congregation, was entered as Rogier Kandelaar but his wife appears in a later entry as Isabel Sandelens, a form representing the registrar's



attempt to record her pronunciation of the name. Her husband had evidently acquired some knowledge of Dutch, not sufficient indeed to teach him the exact translation of *chandler* but enough to enable him to replace it by a good Dutch word of different meaning but nearest to *chandler* in sound.

Refugees who were not members of a group migration were less tenacious of their native speech and customs. Jan Janszoon Starter was one of these. He was born in Amsterdam of English parents and was evidently proud of his foreign ancestry; for he had himself described as Anglo-brittannus in the oval-shaped inscription that frames his engraved portrait. But this Anglo-Briton distinguished himself among the minor Dutch poets of the early seventeenth century. A few translations of poems by Campion that occur among his collected verse are proof that he was familiar with the language of his parents. But there is no evidence that he could write English.

Even Holland's greatest poet, Joost van den Vondel, was not a native son. Dutch was his language, but he spoke it in the Brabant manner when his parents settled in Amsterdam. He grew up among Brabant refugees and did not enter the fellowship of the Amsterdam poets and the spirit of Amsterdam citizenship until he was in his early thirties. Those Brabant refugees formed the most numerous group of aliens in Amsterdam. It was chiefly the people of character and energy who preferred liberty abroad to bondage at home, and the Dutch Republic greatly benefited by the influx of so much talent and enterprise from the southern Netherlands.

Scholars, writers, artists, craftsmen, merchants, brought their learning, skills, and business connections to Amsterdam and other cities in the north and contributed to the upswing of Holland's culture and commerce. The plan for a West India Company and the founding of colonies in America was first

conceived by William Usselinx, a refugee merchant from Antwerp; Frans Hals, the painter, was the son of an Antwerp linen weaver who settled in Haarlem; Carel van Mander, artist, poet, and author of *The Lives of the Dutch Painters*, came from Meulebeke in Flanders; Simon Stevin, a pioneer in the sciences of statics and hydrostatics and proficient also in mathematics, financial management, musical theory, civics, and fortification, was a native of Bruges. The Dutch they spoke was different from the speech of Holland, but the second generation must have spoken and acted as native Hollanders. In their case adjustment and assimilation were an easier and quicker process than they were for refugees who spoke a foreign tongue.

Adjustment was especially hard for the Huguenots from France and the Walloon provinces because the knowledge of French was widespread among the educated classes in Holland, and Dutch tradespeople did their best to acquire the language so as to meet their foreign customers halfway. In Antwerp and on the isle of Walcheren, says Walraven in his English primer, the Netherlands spoke French for the benefit of the many French and Walloon refugees. That was both gracious and profitable, for everyone likes to make his purchases where he can speak his own language and be readily understood. But it did not encourage the French to learn Dutch and retarded their adjustment to the life and customs of their adopted country.

Their religion also kept them apart. They shared the Calvinist faith, it is true, with a large section of the Dutch population, but they had their own French churches in all the principal towns of Holland, each subordinate to a central autonomous organization, the Walloon Church so-called, which has maintained the French language as its vehicle down to the present day. It was a minister of that church, M. Guillaume Feugueray, who in the early summer of 1575 was entrusted by the Prince of

Orange with the task of drawing up a program of studies for the newly founded University of Leyden. He did not fail to include the instruction of his native speech in the curriculum. "Lest we fail the common weal in anything," he wrote, "we shall publicly illustrate the rules of the French language with examples and the reading of the most eloquent authors of that tongue in order that there be an opportunity here to learn the French language, which is so widely used nowadays throughout these Netherlands both in ecclesiastical and political affairs."

French, moreover, was the language of the stadtholder's court at The Hague and the vehicle of polite conversation among those circles of burgher society that aped the fashions of their social betters. The daughters of the ruling class in town and country were sent to the French school, while the sons, after a classical training in Latin, took courses in a French university or went traveling with a Frenchman as tutor and mentor.

Still, even the French, however hard the Dutch made it for them to acquire their language, were gradually absorbed in the Dutch community. In 1715 the States General declared all French refugees within the Republic naturalized citizens. Their total number, around the year 1700, was estimated at 75,000 by an agent of d'Avaux, the French ambassador at The Hague. There are thousands of families in present-day Holland whose names still betray their French origin. Many still belong to the Walloon Church; but their native speech is Dutch, and their civic loyalty belongs to the kingdom of the Netherlands.

German immigrants were more easily assimilated. The majority were Protestants who preferred life in the Calvinist Republic to remaining under the rule of a Catholic prince. But many also came to escape poverty at home and to earn a decent wage in wealthy Holland. The large masses of the German people were poor compared to the Dutch. "Der steinreiche Holländer" was

the proverbial expression of the German people's envious respect for the commercial greatness of the Republic. Many adventurous German boys sought employment in the Dutch Eldorado or enlisted in the service of the Dutch East India Company. The Germans of that day did not call themselves the master race. They were willing to serve foreigners for a modest wage and were easily absorbed by the nation that gave them employment.

Speakers of a Low German dialect adjusted themselves most readily. Their speech was very similar to the Dutch that was spoken in the eastern provinces of the Republic; in fact, the people of Westphalia were of the same stock to which the peasantry of Twente and Drente belonged. Thousands of Germans and Swiss served as mercenaries in the armies of the United Provinces, and many stayed on as peaceful burghers of the state they had helped to defend. The armed forces of the Republic were composed of many nationalities. They formed a foreign legion rather than a national army. In the days of Prince Frederik Hendrik, the second quarter of the seventeenth century, the foreign contingents made up more than one-third of his man power. Besides Germans and Swiss there were regiments of French and Walloons, of English and Scots. A regiment under the command of members of the clan of Mackay served in the Netherlands from 1572 till 1782 and many Mackays are still to be found in present-day Holland. Their clan is not the only one that has a Dutch offshoot. There are subjects of Queen Juliana who bear the un-Dutch names of Macleod, Macdonald, Macneil, MacGillavry, Mackenzie, Balfour of Burleigh, Hamilton of Silverton Hill. The Netherlands cannot complain of Scottish stinginess. The Highlands have been generous to the Low Countries in sending them some of their bravest sons to fight for Dutch freedom and, in the offspring of these, have given them loyal citizens of the kingdom of the Netherlands.

A more exotic element was instilled into the urban melting pot of Amsterdam by the immigration of Portuguese Jews. After the conquest of Portugal by Spain in 1580, the Jews were expelled from the country. Many found a refuge in Amsterdam. They established a synagogue there in 1597 and adopted the phoenix as its emblem. From the ashes of their martyrs who had died at the stake in Spanish *auto da fé*s the Jewish faith sprang to new life in the free air of Amsterdam. A second Portuguese congregation was formed eleven years later, and this also took shelter under the wings of the phoenix. A third chose the pelican instead, but when the three became united in 1639, it was the phoenix that hovered, spread-eagle fashion, over the fusion. Its senior rabbi was Haham Saul Levi Morteira, a friend of Rembrandt and for many years his near neighbor in the Jewish quarter.

That quarter was not a ghetto in the proper sense of the word. At no time were the Jews of Amsterdam forced to live in a separate ward walled off from the rest of the city, nor were they compelled to wear badges by which they could be recognized as Jews. They stuck together voluntarily. The first comers, in the nineties of the sixteenth century, settled on the right bank of the Amstel, south of the medieval part of Amsterdam, and this section remained their exclusive domain until the Nazis exterminated Dutch Jewry. On summer days, the population, like the Hebrew tent dwellers of ancient Palestine, lived in the open on stoops and pavements, gossiping and squabbling, transacting business, and settling family affairs. The scene in front of his house was to Rembrandt a resuscitation of New Testament life. He needed but open a front-parlor window to find suggestions right and left for scenes from the life of Christ and illustrations of the parables.

The States of Holland, by a resolution of 1616, left the cities

of the province free to decide for themselves whether to admit or to exclude Jewish immigrants. It gave the individual towns supreme power over their Jewish residents. They were regarded as subjects of the burgomasters, not as aliens liable to expulsion. They benefited by this arrangement; for Dutch commercialism saw the advantage of attracting wealthy Jews with business connections in foreign countries, and the cities vied with one another in conniving at the non-enforcement of their own regulations restricting the life and activities of Jewish residents.

The Jews possessed no civil rights in the Dutch Republic. The craft guilds were closed to them, so that they were limited to such professions as were not organized in corporations. First among these was the diamond industry. Rich Portuguese diamond dealers became the employers of the poorer Jews from Portugal, Germany, and Poland. In 1748 their Christian competitors made an attempt to check their ascendancy by requesting the city council to organize the industry into a guild to which Jews should pay dues without the right to vote, to forbid the employment of new Jewish apprentices, and to prohibit the Jews from working on Sundays. The city government, however, refused to comply with their petition "because the Jews had established the diamond trade in Amsterdam."

The jewelry business was not the only means of livelihood that was open to Jewish immigrants. There were in seventeenth-century Amsterdam Jewish silk manufacturers, sugar refiners, printers, book dealers, tobacco merchants, brokers, physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, grocers, innkeepers, money lenders. Wealthy Jews played a part on the Amsterdam exchange. In 1687 an Amsterdam lawyer, Nicholas Muys van Holy, published a pamphlet advocating the imposition of a tax on time speculations in shares of the East and West India Companies. His special point was an attack on the bear market, which he considered to

be harmful to both the companies and the commonwealth. "The trade in shares," he wrote, "is mostly in the hands of the Portuguese nation, which enjoys more freedom in this land than in most regions of the world." Several pamphlets disputed his charge, and one anonymous author retorted that, if Jews were guilty, they were in the good company of many prominent Christian gentlemen who traded in company shares whenever they saw a chance of making money.

Amsterdam gave more to the Jews than it received in return. It offered them a haven of refuge from a world universally hostile to them, and a sphere of capitalistic activity in which their race was in its very element, highly trained as it was by age-long experience in the manipulation of money, that being the only remunerative pursuit left open to them by Christian intolerance. Considering their numerical insignificance, their share in the industry and commerce of Amsterdam was very large. Jewish capital was heavily invested in the Dutch West India Company. Many Jews sailed for its colonies in the Western Hemisphere and became plantation owners in Brazil, Dutch Guiana, and Curaçao, whence several subsequently migrated to the United States. Wherever Dutch enterprise went pioneering for profit, in the Baltic, on the Barbary coast, in Turkey, in the Levant, in America, in the Far East, Amsterdam Jews followed in its trail and contributed to Holland's commercial and colonial expansion.

The Portuguese Jews, the Sephardim, were the leaders of their race in seventeenth-century Holland. The Ashkenazim, the Jews from Germany and Eastern Europe, far outnumber them at the present day, but the Portuguese community still retains its social prestige and prominence. The Sephardim form the aristocracy of Dutch Jewry. They were the heirs of Spanish and Moorish culture, they brought with them refinement, a love of

letters, learning, and philosophy, which gave them distinction among the Dutch and leadership over the Ashkenazim. The names of these Sephardic families have a musical cadence and sonority that sound exotic in Dutch ears: Spinoza, Cardozo, Pereira, Orobio de Castro, Mendes da Costa, Lopes Suasso, Teixeira de Mattos, Da Costa Gomes de la Peñha. Men and women bearing such names have been Dutch residents for ten generations and full-fledged citizens for nearly a century and a half, for in 1796 the Jews, both Sephardim and Ashkenazim, were emancipated and accorded full citizens' rights.

Few aliens settled in the rural districts. Even those who had been tillers of the soil at home sought employment in the towns. Within the city walls there was safety from the terrors of war and marauding soldiers. The mixture of nationalities that imperceptibly changed the urban type did not take place in the country. There the native characteristics were more constant. The Dutch peasant of present-day Holland shows undoubtedly a closer resemblance to the town dweller of the fifteenth century than the citizen of modern Amsterdam.

Calvinism cannot claim any credit for this open-door policy. The ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church repeatedly protested against the indiscriminate admission of doubtful elements from foreign lands. But the merchants who were the rulers in the town councils and States assemblies would not brook any interference by the Church in matters of secular policies. Occasionally a bold preacher, in imitation of the Hebrew prophets, dared defy them and appeal from the pulpit to the congregation for support against the magistracy; but the burgomasters had the power to discipline the trouble shooter: they promptly banned him from the city.

The large majority of the ruling class were tolerant, liberal-minded men averse to the rigidity of the Calvinist doctrine.



They were the spiritual heirs of Erasmus and of Prince William, the apostle of tolerance. Calvin's pessimism was distasteful to them. He taught that man was incapable of any good and inclined to all wickedness; the Dutch merchants, men of aggressive enterprise and daring, faced the future with cheerful optimism. They read the books of Coornhert rather than the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert was the antipode of the Calvinists. He denied that sin was innate in man and held him capable of eschewing wrongdoing. "Perfectionist" the Calvinists called him and meant it as a term of abuse. Charity was to Coornhert the essential mark of the true Christian, and such Christians might be found within any denomination, even outside of the churches. The outward forms of religious worship were in his eyes of but secondary importance. A Christian's chief worship was to live virtuously guided by his conscience in the light shed by Christ.

Uncompromising orthodoxy was rampant among the refugees from the southern Netherlands, all clamorous supporters of the ministers. These were vociferous in their protests against the conclusion, in 1609, of the truce with Spain, which they denounced as a betrayal of the true religion in their homeland. Prince Maurice, Prince William's son and successor, was equally opposed to the truce, since it gave the Spaniards a badly needed respite and prevented him from extending his victorious campaign to the provinces not yet liberated. Hence the orthodox saw in the Prince of Orange their hero and protagonist against the merchant oligarchy. Oldenbarneveltdt, the leading statesman of Holland, and the ruling class whose spokesman he was, were faced by the hostility of all those who rallied around the prince as their champion.

The strength of the Orange faction was greatly enhanced by the defection of Amsterdam from the Oldenbarneveltdt party.

Since the conclusion of the truce the city was among the bitterest opponents of the great statesman. Its merchants had carried the war against Spain to her colonies in the East and West Indies, and were just beginning to reap a golden harvest from piratical exploits against the Spanish in those parts when the truce intervened. Commercial profit was the compass by which the rulers of Amsterdam steered their political course, and though they would not deliberately choose a course that might increase the power of the Prince of Orange, they were willing to take that risk if thereby they could increase the city's trade.

The victory over Spain, which was due to the Calvinists, had won for the Dutch Reformed Church a privileged position that made it virtually a state church. Still, the militant orthodox who had brought it to triumph were, as we saw, a minority in the Republic. There were many burghers who had fought for political liberty but did not wish to secede from the Mother Church, and others who did secede cared little for a state church that substituted for Roman intolerance the intolerance of an uncompromising Calvinism. The spirit of the Modern Devotion still lingered on in many a burgher home, and fanaticism was alien to that spirit. In the first flush of victory, however, the Calvinist extremists carried it all before them. They would not allow any deviations from the pure doctrine of Calvin. During the twelve years' truce, dissension arose within the bosom of the Church over Calvin's dogma of predestination. Man himself, Calvin taught, could not contribute to his ultimate salvation; to assume that he could would be tantamount to denying the omnipotence of God. A man was to be saved or doomed through no merit or guilt of his own; God's will alone determined a man's fate in the life beyond. The opponents of this dogma argued that it blunted man's desire to lead a good life

and held that election to salvation was dependent on man's use of divine grace, which is conferred on him by baptism.

The dispute started at the University of Leyden but rapidly grew from an academic debate between Gomarus, the orthodox Calvinist, and Arminius, the anti-predestinarian, to a nationwide controversy that brought the country to the verge of civil war. The temporal powers became involved, for the States of Holland, in response to a Remonstrance addressed to them by the Arminians, proposed that a church synod of that province should be called to pass on the matter, and the Orange faction clamored for a federal synod. Thus a moot question of political import was injected into the theological debate, the question whether the sovereignty that had been taken away from King Philip II was now vested in the people's representatives of the individual provinces or in the federal congress, the States General so-called. Prince Maurice of Orange, as stadtholder of several provinces and Lieutenant General and Admiral of the Union, was by virtue of this combination of functions an upholder of federal sovereignty; Oldenbarneveltdt, as the spokesman of Holland's provincial autonomy, considered the sovereignty to be vested in the assemblies of the provincial states. When neither side would yield to the other and a compromise proved impossible, Maurice cut the Gordian knot by armed action. The towns that favored the Oldenbarneveltdt faction were occupied by his troops, their governments were replaced by more amenable rulers, the opposition leaders including Oldenbarneveltdt and Hugo Grotius were arrested and tried for treason before a special court of justice. Grotius was found guilty and condemned to lifelong imprisonment, and Holland's leading statesman, the great architect of the Republic, lost his head on the scaffold. And to make the triumph of orthodox Calvinism com-

plete, a federal synod, held at Dordrecht, found the Arminians guilty of heresy and expelled their ministers from church and country.

The severity of the sentence acted as a boomerang, for Holland's urban patriciate countered with an enduring hatred of the House of Orange and all it stood for. The prince's use of the armed forces against Dutch burghers was bitterly resented, for the army consisted of foreign mercenaries officered by foreigners. Maurice was suspected of an ambition to seize the sovereignty for himself with the aid of his praetorians and to change the Republic into an hereditary monarchy. That never! the merchant rulers swore. They had learned under Philip II to what abuse of power one-man rule might lead and were not willing to accept it from another, not even from a descendant of Prince William of Orange. The prince had to be satisfied with the title of stadtholder, absurd though it was. His father had borne it before him, but in those days it was not meaningless, for William I of Orange had been Philip II's regent in Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht, holding the sovereign's stead in his absence. Since the sovereign had been abjured, there was no sense in maintaining a stadtholder who was nobody's substitute. The ever-present States of the provinces had arrogated the sovereign power to themselves, and they willingly let the prince retain the old title as it stamped him the servant of their supreme authority. Being a stadtholder of several provinces and commander in chief of the federal army and navy, he was a servant wielding interstate power and for that reason a potential danger. The merchant rulers of Holland would gladly have dispensed with him altogether, and at the first opportunity that offered they seized it without compunction.

That was in the year 1651. The Spanish war was over by that time. Prince Frederik Hendrik had brought it to a glorious end;

his military successes, which had added large parts of Brabant and Limburg to the territory of the Republic, had won him wide popularity, greatly to the concern of the Holland oligarchs, who watched with alarm the steady climb of their nominal servant to the position of an actual monarch. The prince's army, famed throughout Europe for its brilliant exploits, was a military academy at which young noblemen from England, France, and the Empire sought training in the science of war; and his court at The Hague acquired lustre from the concourse of so many titled aristocrats from foreign lands. The prince's father, when he had sacrificed his fortune to the cause of Dutch freedom, kept court at Delft in the simplest style. Sir Fulke Greville, who visited him there, found him indistinguishable in outward appearance from the common burghers of that beer-brewing town. The portraits painted of Frederik Hendrik by contemporary artists do not resemble the Englishman's verbal picture of his father. The House in the Wood, a small palace he ordered built on the outskirts of The Hague, was decorated under his wife's directions with large murals in the baroque style of the school of Rubens, which tell the story of the prince's life in terms of classical antiquity. The merchant rulers must have raised their eyebrows at seeing the stadtholder who owed them obedience depicted here as a Roman triumphator. He was indeed in all but name a mighty monarch, and that he impressed the outside world as such was proved by the marriage of his son William II to Mary Stuart, daughter of King Charles I of England.

This son succeeded Frederik Hendrik in 1647. The young prince was eager to emulate the military exploits of his father, but the time of his accession to the stadtholderate was not propitious to the furtherance of his hopes. Peace negotiations were in progress at Münster, where delegates from Spain, France, and the Republic had been in conference since 1646. The Spanish

envoys offered the Dutch the most generous terms but refused to yield to the demands of France, which had been the Republic's ally since 1635. The Dutch delegates, under pressure from Holland, fell for the bait and concluded with Spain a separate peace which the United Provinces were bound by their treaty with France not to conclude. The Republic received from Spain recognition of its complete independence; it retained all the land it had reconquered and obtained the right to bar the Scheldt to all commercial traffic.

The peace was a cruel blow to the young prince's hopes. He wanted to continue the war, to conquer with French aid the southern Netherlands, to partition them between the two victors, and to help restore the Stuarts to the English throne. Holland's merchant rulers had thwarted these martial ambitions. The southern Netherlands under Spanish rule seemed to them a less menacing neighbor than France would be. They wanted the latter's friendship but not her foot on their doorstep.

The peace engendered the same animosities that had divided the nation after the conclusion of the truce in 1609. Again the orthodox Calvinists supported the prince, but this time the Orangist faction could not count on the aid of Amsterdam. Its rulers did not wish the prince to recapture Antwerp and thus to add a free rival to the Republic's territory. They were pleased with the peace that gave them the right to blockade the Scheldt and to paralyze their rival's commerce.

With the danger of war removed, the States of Holland proposed a reduction of the Republic's armed forces, which was an indirect way of reducing the power of the prince. The States General, however, rejected that plan, whereupon Holland refused to contribute her part of the army budget. Again the country was brought to the verge of war. The Orangists resorted to force, the prince had several prominent members of the States

of Holland imprisoned, and made an abortive attempt to seize Amsterdam by surprise. Though the city held its own, its rulers did not care to press the issue. They made their peace with the prince, and the States of Holland conceded that the States General alone had the power to reduce the size of the federal army.

The Orange faction had triumphed, but it did not long enjoy the fruits of victory. Three months later the stadtholder suddenly died of smallpox in his twenty-fourth year.

His death was a windfall for Jan de Witt, a native of Dordrecht, who shortly after was elected to the high office that once had been Oldenbarneveldt's. There was no stadtholder whose power could counterbalance his; the prince's posthumous son was a negligible opponent for at least the next two decades, and De Witt was confident that he could keep him excluded for life from the high offices his father and grandfather had held.

Jan de Witt, as Pensionary of Holland being the most powerful man in the most powerful province of the Union, centralized in his own person the management of the Republic's foreign affairs. As a statesman he was a match for the ablest diplomats of Europe, among whom he was respected not only for his political genius but also for his incorruptible probity. He was one of the few men of authority in the Republic, said the French ambassador, who was impervious to bribes. Thanks to his genius the Seven United Provinces, which as autonomous states brooked no interference with their internal affairs by the others, won for themselves an international position of such power and prestige that they often presumed to interfere in the political conflicts of Europe.

The leadership of Holland in the foreign affairs of the Republic had its dangers. Enriched by commerce and navigation, hauling in the treasures of other continents, Holland was pre-

eminently concerned with the maintenance of the Union's sea power. Her representatives in the States General saw the chief enemy in England; they failed to see the greater danger with which the imperialism of King Louis XIV threatened the very existence of the United Netherlands. A strong, efficient fleet and a neglected army were the natural results of this one-sided policy.

Jan de Witt, it is true, was not blind to its dangers, but all his efforts to balance the defense system came to naught owing to the dissensions and bickerings in the States General. The Orangists in the assembly, chiefly recruited from the land provinces, would not vote appropriations for a larger army unless first the Prince of Orange, then a mere stripling, were appointed commander in chief. De Witt could not consent to that. It was his sworn duty to guard the Republic's liberty, and how could he be sure that the army led by an inexperienced youth would offer adequate protection? The boy's father, Prince William II, had brought the country, in 1650, to the brink of civil war by reckless military action against the city of Amsterdam; how could he be sure that the son, equally young and ambitious, would not repeat his father's attempt? Frustrated by such factious strife, De Witt was forced to rely on his statecraft to avert a war on land. He kept the ambitions of Louis in check for a time, but the ingenious construction of his foreign diplomacy succumbed like a house of cards when, in 1672, the King of France succeeded in forming an anti-Dutch coalition with England and the archbishops of Münster and Cologne. Attacked from three sides the Dutch Republic seemed lost. In their despair the people turned against the man whom they held responsible for the disaster; and as they had done in the days of the Spanish war, and would do again in the less glorious years of 1747 and 1813, they looked to the Prince of Orange for



help. Common danger found salvation in unity, and found that unity embodied in the stadtholder and Lieutenant General of the federal army.

The personalities of De Witt and Prince William III stand out in history as the incarnate principles of provincial sovereignty and centralized confederacy. No Netherlander of today would wish for a return to De Witt's political system. The stadtholder, William III, the uncrowned monarch of the Republic, stood for a better state organization, such as in 1815 became a constitutional reality. The tragedy of De Witt's life was not so much in the ingratitude of the people as in the dedication of his great gifts to a lost cause. Freedom as he conceived it was a survival of the Middle Ages. The seventeenth century had made an advance toward a larger unity: the rivalry of provinces had superseded the petty jealousies of towns and cities. The establishment in 1815 of the kingdom of the Netherlands superseding in its turn the autonomy of the individual provinces was a result of a natural process by which the lesser interest is merged in the greater. And even the monarchy seems not to be the final phase of this process of amalgamation. The Pensionary tried to preserve provincial identity from absorption by forces astir within the national sphere; in these mightier days it is the identity of the kingdom sprung from that contest that seems destined in its turn to become merged in a still larger, international unity, embracing the nations of Europe.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MIJNHEERS

A WHOLE nation taking sides with passion and bitterness in a dispute over theological doctrine is a phenomenon that must seem incomprehensible to our modern age. Various factors combined to turn the Dutch Protestants into dogmatic partisans. Bible reading was for them a daily ritual. Having won the right to read Holy Writ in the vernacular at the sacrifice of the lives of a host of martyrs, they continued reading it with a vengeance. There was no Protestant household without its Bible. Its possession was a challenge to the Church of Rome that had so long withheld it from them; and nearly every Dutch Protestant could share in the reading of it, for there was little illiteracy in the Netherlands.

Guicciardini, a resident of Antwerp who in the sixties of the sixteenth century published an excellent *Description of the Low Countries* in his native language, asserted that "the majority of the common people knew some rudiments of grammar, and nearly everyone, even the peasants and country folk, could at least read and write," and the great Scaliger, who taught at Leyden during the last thirteen years of his life, also praised the widespread literacy of the Dutch. The ministers encouraged school attendance that the children later on might take an intelligent part in the Church service. The schools were not owned by the Church, but the magistracy that was responsible for their upkeep allowed the consistories a say in the selection of the mas-

ters. Each householder, at mealtime, read a chapter from the Bible to his family and servants, and twice or three times on Sundays many went to church and listened to sermon and Bible lesson. Attendance was not an irksome duty. Religion was the people's chief preoccupation, since politics was none of their concern. The common man had no vote in the selection of the municipal and provincial governments. Without any political influence or responsibility, they cared little what happened in the councils of the mighty. But they did care a great deal what happened in their church, for they themselves had elected the elders and, indirectly through them, the minister who was their spiritual leader. Participation in church affairs was democracy in action, and loyalty to the minister was a form of self-gratification: they loved him because they had chosen him.

The majority of the parishioners, of course, could not grasp the niceties of the predestinarian doctrine. They grew passionate in its defense because the minister told them it was God's truth; and the parish whose *dominee*, as the minister was called, proclaimed in the pulpit the opposite doctrine was believed with equal conviction and fervor. The ministers were God's envoys, they surely must know the truth; and those who taught what their own *dominee* condemned must be false envoys.

When defrocked ministers went into exile or hiding, or traveled in disguise to preach in secret, their parishes remained loyal to them. One of them preached in winter from a sledge to an audience on skates who moved along with him across the ice. "Ice birdie" they called him, with the endearing diminutive that expressed their affection. Poor fishermen at Noordwijk, on the North Sea coast, who together had listened to the reading of a letter from their imprisoned minister, were fined twenty-four guilders each. Yet in spite of persecution and church discipline little was changed.

The Synod's demand that confession of the Dordrecht doctrine be made a condition for appointment to government office was never conceded by the secular authorities. Petition after petition to that effect was coolly ignored by the merchant rulers. The former partisans of the late Oldenbarneveltdt were restored to the positions of power from which Maurice had deposed them, and in the thirties, when the Arminians had organized a separate church, under the name of Remonstrant Brotherhood, they obtained permission to establish a seminary for the training of their ministers at Amsterdam, the very city whose rulers had sided with the Orange party against Oldenbarneveltdt.

The inclusion of moderates and non-conformists in the city governments in defiance of the ministers' protests was not the cause but only one of many symptoms of the strained relations between city council and consistory. Their antagonism had not only political, but also social and cultural facets. Most of the preachers came from the lower middle class. Liberal stipends made it possible for sons of poor families to study theology at small cost to their parents; and since a church career was an attainable goal for the humbly born, it did not appeal to the sons of patricians. Hence the contempt that the city rulers felt for the bigotry and fanaticism of the ministers was mixed with disdain for their middle-class persons. The reverend gentlemen were conscious of the condescension with which they were admitted to the drawing rooms of the mighty. They knew it was the frock they wore that was invited; the respect that it claimed and received was seldom extended to the wearer. This invidious class distinction outlasted the life of the Republic. As late as the middle of the nineteenth century a minister's wife was greeted as *Juffrouw*, whereas the wife of a councilman possessed the prerogative of being addressed as *Mevrouw*.

In the merchant Republic wealth was the social barometer.

The greater the weight of the pressure a man's money could exert upon the life of the city, the deeper the respect he could command from his fellow burghers. Many a divine was the cultural superior of his social betters. When the States of Holland decided to found a university at Leyden, the decision was prompted by the wish to possess a school for the training of an informed ministry. The care of souls was indeed entrusted by the Dutch Reformed Church to men of learning. Colonial settlements could not expect to get the pick of available preachers, but even the Reverend Jonas Michaelius, the first *dominee* to take charge of the isolated congregation of New Amsterdam on Manhattan, could preach in French to the Walloons among his parishioners and correspond in Latin with colleagues in the fatherland. Yet, learning in the poor and humble did not raise them to social distinction in the Republic's plutocracy. Its aristocrats were the men of wealth.

The old nobility was not extinct but their influence counted for little in the Republic. They supplied officers to the federal army and represented the rural populace in the States' assemblies; but they were easily outvoted by the cities which, solely concerned with the promotion of commerce, cared little for the needs of the peasantry. In the course of the seventeenth century, however, self-interest turned the attention of the capitalists toward the countryside. The purse-proud patricians began to vie in acquiring manorial estates; and burghers whose grandfathers had lacked a family name now sported high-sounding seignorial titles.

In the Middle Ages the possession of a family name was far from common. The average burgher, even if he owned one, was called by his baptismal name. There were, of course, several Willems and Jans and Dirks in every community, and people resorted to various means of distinguishing them: Willem Jansen

(John's son), Willem Smith, Willem de Zwaan (the Swan, that being the sign of his workshop), Willem de Lange (the Long one), Willem ter Brugghe (at the Bridge). Such identifying additions were apt to become family names in the next generation, so that there were Jansens whose father's name was not Jan, Smiths who did not belong to the craft, De Zwaans who had no workshop at that sign, De Langes who might be short of stature, Ter Brugghe living far from any bridge.

The mention of a man's father did not go out of use with the acquisition of a family name. Pieter Hooft, poet and historian and son of Cornelis Hooft, an Amsterdam burgomaster, always signed himself Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft, and a fellow poet and playwright who was a son of Adriaen, master shoemaker at the sign of The Count of Bredero, was known in Amsterdam as Gerbrand Adriaanszoon Bredero.

Many a wealthy patrician now added to the family name the title of lord of some manorial estate. The name Huygens was an old patronymic meaning son of Hugo and was borne by a distinguished family of the seventeenth century, whose most illustrious member was Christian, the physicist and astronomer; Christian's father, Constantijn, a poet and diplomat and secretary to the Prince of Orange, described himself on the title page of his collected verse as Constantijn Huygens, Knight, Lord of Zuylichem, Zeelhem, and in Monickeland. A son-in-law of Oldenbarneveltdt importuned the French ambassador at The Hague for a French title of nobility, and the latter, in passing the request on to the minister De Villeroy in Paris, added by way of comment that the longing for a knighthood was an epidemic disease in the Republic; it had come over from England, he wrote, where the late Queen Elizabeth had created several knights among the Dutch.

John Evelyn, the diarist, visited Holland in the summer of

1621, when the annual fair of Rotterdam was in full swing. He was surprised to see paintings by skilled Dutch masters on exhibit and for sale in the open-air market and wondered at the low prices for which they could be bought. This large artistic output, he was told, was stimulated by the demand from the country farmers, who invested their savings in pictures since they could not invest them in real estate, for this was all in the hands of the urban capitalists. The plutocrats' land hunger soon consumed the available supply, but dearth of land did not diminish the appetite. Lacking land for its satisfaction they began to create it. An engineering genius, Jan Adriaanszoon Leechwater, perfected the use of the windmill for the drainage of flooded lands and inland lakes, and under his direction large areas of water-covered countryside north of Amsterdam were laid dry and turned into fertile polders.

The Zaan River wound its leisurely way through that part of north Holland where most of the new polders were embedded within their girdles of dikes. The wealthy men who had borne the expense of the reclamation built summer homes in the ditch-lined pasture. The choice of scenery was characteristic for the taste of the age. In the eighteenth century their grandsons would withdraw to summer resorts along the banks of the Vecht, a pleasant river that meanders through the flat woodland from the environs of Utrecht to the Zuider Zee. There was nothing poetical in the low pasture land of the polders. What attracted them there was not scenic beauty but the richness of the soil, the fertility that yielded marketable goods rather than pleasing and picturesque vistas. They bred livestock and laid out vegetable gardens and planted orchards and proudly surveyed the prospect from the windows or the stoops of their polder mansions. Some of these houses are still standing, unostentatious little palaces constructed with exquisite taste. The

owners who brought their families to the land every summer made the country folk superficially familiar with various aspects of cultured life that could not fail to have a softening effect upon their rusticity. Gentler manners imperceptibly polished native uncouthness. Even out-of-the-way places were reached by this civilizing process, for even these were easily accessible by horse-drawn canal boats, the common transportation vehicle in the Dutch Republic.

The freedom with which servants spoke to their masters and their resentment of any treatment that wounded their self-respect were often commented on by foreign visitors. "The servants," wrote the Frenchman De Parival, "have so many privileges that the masters dare not even beat them; if a master is carried away by his anger and either beats his maid or expels her in a rough and violent manner, he is condemned by the magistrates where she takes her complaint to pay a fine and sometimes her full wage although she has not served her full term." An Englishman who, in 1740, published anonymously *The Present State of Holland or a Description of the United Provinces*, was surprised to see how little difference there was between the various classes of Dutch society. Even servants, he said, were treated with a gracious manner, such as subordinates could not expect anywhere else in the world. The Hollanders actually refrained from beating their domestics, which, to judge from his astonishment, was a common practice in England.

He was not the first Briton to comment on this creditable feature of social life in Holland. An earlier booklet, which appeared, also anonymously, in 1664, under the title, *The Dutch Drawn to the Life*, has this to say on the subject: "They are all equal, no way to know Master or Mistress . . . Malkie can prate as much, laugh as loud, be as bold, and sit as well as Mistress; your man may be saucy, and you must not strike him."



But this, of course, is not a lifelike drawing, but a deliberate caricature.

Sauciness on the part of the servant was not the natural concomitant of the master's forbearance and self-restraint. Constantijn Huygens, though the most humane of masters, would not suffer any impertinence within his household. "I brook no familiarity, no contradiction, no meddling," he wrote in 1683, when he was in his eighty-fourth year. "But I hold the reins so gently that to them I do not seem to hold them. And seeing myself respected, I have the less objection to hearing the latest news discussed by one of my servants, in whom it would be unseemliness without my permission. For, say I to myself, through what fault of theirs must these lesser creatures live like slaves and be at my service? Why must not I serve them? Has a public or private calamity overwhelmed their ancestors generations ago, so that their children's children must pay for it with their freedom and be slaves under my orders, although their blood is doubtless as good as mine? How can I feel less than compassion for them, and, seeing the world's ebb and flow all around, help dreading lest fortune may turn any day, making them what I am, and me what they are?"

The patrician class to which Huygens belonged was that of the *heeren*; all those who were not *heeren* were lumped together under the name *het volk*, the people. *Mijnheer* is the vocative of *heer*, and in that form, which is most frequently heard in everyday speech, the English took it over and used it as another name for Dutchman. But in Dutch it would be incorrect to talk about *de mijnheeren*, just as it would be to speak in English of "the House of Mylords." *Heer* is not an equivalent of lord. It is not a title of nobility but marks the man so addressed as a member of the ruling class. Its origin was, indeed, aristocratic. In the Middle Ages the *heeren* were the feudal lords, to whom the

burghers of the towns looked up with respect and awe. But the burghers who began to equal the *heeren* in wealth veered from respect to envy and coveted the title that would make them the social equals of the nobility. But as they rose from burgher to *heer*, the title, being borne by so many, lost caste and came to mean no more than master, one who is greater than another. The *heeren* of the seventeenth century were masters of the people; they were not noblemen as their feudal namesakes had been. By the purchase of a manorial estate they acquired right to the title *heer* in its untarnished glory, but the distinction thus bought was never acknowledged in daily intercourse. Constantijn Huygens was not addressed as Heer van Zuylichem, he remained Mijtheer Huygens to everybody who greeted him.

It would almost seem as if titles were taboo in the Dutchman's speech. Even the highest dignitaries of the Republic were addressed with no more than *mijtheer*. That is still the common practice of modern Holland. The vocative *mijtheer* can now be addressed to nearly everybody who is not a beggar or a drunken sot, but the vulgarization of the patrician title has not produced a crop of new ones for distinguishing the men of light and leading from the common crowd. Everyone in the Netherlands is *mijtheer* as everyone in America is mister.

These same Dutchmen, who were bold democrats in speech, were toadies and snobs when they took pen in hand. Most writers in the Republic were men of the people; Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft, Jacob Cats, and Constantijn Huygens belonged to the *heeren*, but they were the exceptions. The large majority of the poets, pamphleteers, and scribblers were dependent on the patronage of their betters. In fulsome epistles dedicatory they gave their benefactors the full measure of their titles and this display in print of the polite and respectful address served as model for the epistolary style of the period. Cringing school-

masters taught this mannerism of their betters to the children of the next generation, and continued to do so until the latter half of the nineteenth century.

It would do the Dutch an injustice to give here the literal translations of the titles in use, for to them they no longer mean what they express; they are mere formulas, empty of meaning, which, if rendered word for word into English, would be re-filled with preposterous significance, deserving the ridicule of the English reader. They have now been relegated to the address side of the envelope. There these meaningless titles still hold their own, protected, it would seem, by a snobbish fear on the part of the writer lest he be suspected of not knowing what is due to his correspondent. Their tenacious survival has cramped the style of the Dutch letter writers; they do not feel at ease with pen in hand and adapt the phrasing of the message to the stiff formality of the address.

A self-conscious awareness of their lack of refinement accounts for their awkwardness on paper. These men who had made their fortunes by dealing in butter and cheese, in salted fish, in grain, in wines, in spices, and what not, knew themselves the inferiors of the French, in whom all Europe recognized its masters in politeness and good manners. They strove to improve their clumsy letter style by scattering French words through their Dutch sentences; Jan de Witt's letters are disgraced by a profusion of such bastard terms, which from the written crept into the spoken language. And as soon as they had become current in the speech of the *heeren*, the lower classes began to parrot them, with the fortunate result that they lost favor with the upper ten, for many French phrases that were once considered fashionable now sound vulgar and are no longer heard among the educated. Yet the Hollander's everyday speech still employs many French terms in exchange for

which the Dutch equivalents have been discarded. Good old words of native stock were thus lost to the language through a snobbish desire on the part of the speakers to make an impression of high-class breeding. Especially in the address to the ladies it was considered good form to parrot the French. An aunt is called *tante*, although early Dutch had a good word for it in *moei*, which is now extinct; but *tante's* husband is still called *oom*, a precious relic of ancient Germanic stock. Sister-in-law is called *schoonzuster*, a literal translation of French *belle-soeur*, but her male counterpart, not requiring especial respect, has retained his true-Dutch name of *zwager*.

A nation that dare not entrust to its own language the vocal accompaniment of its best manners betrays a sad lack of self-respect. This is indeed a chronic weakness of the Dutch people, which they could overcome only in periods of strained patriotism. When the war against Spain for faith and freedom was being fought with great fervor, the native tongue was felt to be a prized possession, and writers vied with each other in cleansing the language of foreign intrusions. Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft, among others, did his best to write prose that was free from all un-Dutch impurities. But this puristic zeal did not last long, and never affected the common speech of everyday.

The impression of a classless society that foreign visitors received and recorded was, accordingly, a superficial one. Its outward manifestations were misleading. A French and a Spanish ambassador, on their way to The Hague in 1608 to take part in the negotiations of a truce, noticed ten men stepping out of a boat and sitting down in the grass to breakfast on bread, cheese, and beer. "Who are they?" they asked a farmer. "The Lords Deputies, our sovereign lords and masters," was his reply. The Pensionary Jan de Witt used to walk through The Hague unattended, and the wife of the great Admiral Michel de Ruyter

was accustomed to doing her own marketing at Amsterdam. Of Burgomaster Valkenier the English Ambassador Henry Sidney wrote in 1679, "The Great Turk hath not more absolute dominion and power over any of his countrymen than he hath at Amsterdam. What he saith is ever done without any contradiction; he turns out and puts in who he likes; raises what money he pleases, does whatever he hath a mind to, and yet he walks about the streets just like an ordinary shopkeeper." There was no ostentation of wealth, lest envy should get the better of the people's respect for the *mijnheers*. These lived well and luxuriously indoors, but in the street, the common meeting ground of rich and poor, an outward sameness maintained a deceptive show of equality.

That sameness was not wholly intentional. It was in part the result of the people's innate thrift, which even the rich did not consider beneath them. When Jan de Witt, already Pensionary of Holland, married the daughter of a wealthy Amsterdam burgomaster, he set up housekeeping with furniture from his father's home at Dordrecht. Clothes were passed on to the next generation in the same way. They were made of such solid material that sons and daughters, when grown up, could step into their parents' wardrobes. To be fashionably dressed was an expensive luxury that common burghers frowned upon as wicked waste.

There were of course changes in attire which, slight though they were, distinguished each generation from its predecessor. They affected most of all the frills and ornaments that could give a novel appearance to an old garment. The ruff especially was subject to periodic modification. In the late sixteenth century it was worn so large that the lawn or cambric had to be propped by wire framework and starched lest it lose its shape. In 1564 a Mistress Dinghen, the daughter of a Dutch gentleman,

arrived in London and taught there the use of starch. She was probably a refugee from the Spanish Inquisition, or she may have left her native land because English love of finery promised her a better livelihood than Dutch simplicity offered her at home. Being the only expert in her craft, she could charge excessive fees. Ladies who wanted to learn starching paid her £5, and she taught the seething of starch for 20s. She was so skillful at starching even the flimsiest materials that it was jestingly said she would soon make ruffs out of spiders' webs. Her art would not have found wide acclaim in Holland. There the ruff never grew to the extravagant size that delighted the aristocracy of Elizabethan England, those absurdities of confection which created the impression that the head surmounted an ornamental wedding cake. In the Netherlands the ruff in tiers of fluted lawn went out of fashion in the thirties of the seventeenth century and was replaced by plain bands or collars, which were made of precious lace for the exacting customers.

The Calvinist ministers were as alert as the Puritans in England, and more successful than these, in fighting modish and newfangled excesses. In the forties they fulminated against the latest fashion for men to wear their hair long. Did not Paul say in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, "If a man have long hair, it is a dishonor to him?" But they could not persuade the males among the upper class to accept St. Paul as arbiter. Long hair remained in vogue until the sixties, when the periwig replaced the natural crop. Samuel Pepys went in November, 1663, to the periwig maker to have his hair cut off and to put on his first periwig, and ordered another to be made up of the hair he left behind. It was about that same time that Dutch gentlemen who thought well of themselves began to wear a cataract of artificial curls over their close-cropped skulls, and a nightcap in bed for the protection of their nocturnal baldness.

The paintings of the period, for all their realism, do not give an entirely truthful picture of daily life; the rich burghers who had their portraits done posed in their best finery, which was brought forth from the bottom drawer only on very special occasions; and the genre painters depicted the people sometimes, it is true, at their daily tasks, but more often at birthday celebrations, at wedding feasts, at public banquets, at country fairs and kermises, exceptional occasions when extravagance and abandon were permitted as a deserved escape from the dull routine of everyday. Then high society could safely make a public splurge without arousing envy and satiric comment, for all classes were apt at such events to throw thrift and restraint out of the window. Everybody was eager to see how it was done among the best families and to copy the example on a more modest scale.

The wedding of Constantijn Huygens' daughter Suzanna was a brilliant affair. He gave a humorous description of it in a letter written in French to Madame la Duchesse de Lorraine. The bride wore a crown of diamonds that had been borrowed for the occasion from ladies at court and in The Hague society. At nine o'clock in the morning the fathers of bride and groom conducted the young man in an open carriage to the church, the groom having had his wig freshly curled and thickly powdered. The three men seated themselves in front of the pulpit, where the floor was covered with costly carpets. Halfway through the sermon the bride entered conducted by a young gentleman of quality, who also was covered by two or three pounds of powder. Then followed the groom's mother on the arm of the bride's eldest brother, and an aunt of the bride escorted by a younger brother. Followed three maidens, two cousins of the bride, the third a cousin of the groom, each with her cavalier. Huygens, unfortunately, did not explain to his correspondent whether this belated appearance was according

to custom or an unintentional insult to the preacher for which the ladies' elaborate dresses were to blame. As soon as the sermon was over, everybody clambered on benches and pews to watch the ceremony of the wedding benediction and to see the young couple, kneeling upon red velvet cushions, say their prayers. The order of arrival was maintained at the departure: the male trio who had entered first were the first to leave, the groom's father this time sitting in the carriage on the right in token of his having assumed, on behalf of his son, marital superiority, the erstwhile servant now being the master of his erstwhile mistress.

When the bride descended from her carriage in front of her father's house, she was received by her husband with great honor and reverence. In front of the windows there was an abundant display of candy as if there had been a hailstorm, and a free-for-all fight among the women and children ensued, to be followed indoors by a free-for-all snatching of kisses. In the banquet room the dining table was all set, and a platform of beautiful white wood for the accommodation of a dozen violinists. Having inspected all this the guests were told to come back at three that they might sit down to dinner at four. Forty-two persons attended the banquet and had the patience and the appetite to keep seated for fully five hours, eating, drinking, and kissing. Then the party adjourned to another room, brilliantly lit with a blaze of candles, and started dancing. Some two hours later a young gallant, a relative of the groom, suddenly snatched the bride away and took her up to the bedroom, followed by the whole company, who began to decrown her, to take off her ribbons, garters, shoelaces, and to make a close inspection of the room. But relief for the bride was at hand: hippocras was served to console her and to settle the uproar. Then the groom, having donned his nightcap and his dressing gown over his



clothes, expelled the riotous party from the room. They scrambled down the stairs like a torrent and resumed the dance, which went on till four o'clock in the morning.

"Dancing the bride to bed," as this riot was called, remained in vogue until the fashion of the honeymoon trip put the bridal bed beyond the prurient curiosity of the wedding guests. Those who could afford the expense of an escape began to do so around 1700, but not until the introduction of the railways, when travel ceased to be a luxury, did the honeymoon trip become the practice also among middle-class burghers.

Every now and then the city authorities issued an ordinance intended to curb extravagance at wedding parties. They forbade the scattering of candies, sweetmeats, and marzipan, and fixed a limit to the number of guests one might invite. In Amsterdam carriages were not allowed, the use of sledges was the extreme of permitted luxury. In this land of canals a less expensive way to go to church was by water, and this must have been a common practice among the people of modest means, since modern Dutch still uses the phrase "to step into the marriage boat" as a synonym of "to marry." The periodical proclamation of these rulings is evidence that they were honored in the breach. Their strict observance would have robbed the bride's neighbors of pleasures that had been sanctioned by age-old tradition as their due.

The neighborhood was indeed a power each burgher had to reckon with. Neighbors belonged together and gave effect to their sense of forming a unit by setting up neighborhood guilds. The extent of each neighborhood was determined by historical factors, for these guilds had their origin in early medieval group formations. Each guild elected a president, called the lord of the neighborhood (*de heer van de buurt*). Once a year, at Shrovetide, the neighbors met at a *buurtmaal*, a neighborhood

banquet, usually held at the neighborhood tavern, unless a generous resident invited the group to his own home. Such parties lowered, for the time being, the barriers between the *mijnheers* and the common folk; where the neighborhood guilds ceased to function the two drifted more and more apart. That happened at an early date in Amsterdam, where the *heeren* reserved the expansion of semi-circular canals for themselves and relegated the trades and industries with the workers employed in them to the other bank of the Amstel. Such a planned reshuffle of population was possible only in a community that, owing to a constant influx of immigrants, was forced to burst its bounds; in smaller, less dynamic towns, the democratic neighborhood guilds had a longer life and often lasted till the end of the Republic.

The Dutch call the honeymoon *wittebroodsweken*, that is, white-bread weeks. The English term is a cynical expression of disbelief in the permanence of conjugal, honey-sweet love: it will wane like the moon. The Dutch, unsentimental realists, stress the impermanence of the good fare that the young couple treats itself to. White bread was a luxury that after the first weeks of reckless happiness would be banned from the table. The daily fare in the average burgher home was very frugal. Sir William Temple commented on "their great parsimony in diet and eating so very little flesh, which the common people seldom do above once a week."

The Dutch of Albany, N.Y., in the middle of the eighteenth century, still adhered to the diet their ancestors had brought with them from Holland. Two travelers, the Swedish botanist Peter Kalm and Dr. Alexander Hamilton, a physician from Annapolis, visited that still isolated and thoroughly Dutch settlement in the forties, Hamilton in 1744, Kalm four years later. Both took pains to describe at length the customs of these Dutch

people because they appeared so different from those they had found elsewhere in the American colonies. They breakfasted on bread and smoked meat, the midday meal consisted of milk or buttermilk with bread or meat either boiled or roasted. Supper was bread and butter and milk. With every meal they ate lettuce with a lot of vinegar and little oil. At breakfast they drank tea, at the other meals either beer, a very thin brew, or pure water.

This Albany menu of two hundred years ago represents the daily fare of the Dutch burghers in the heyday of the Republic, except that tea was not yet a common drink in the seventeenth century. At its first introduction it was used as a medicine, and when it was discovered that the potion of the sick was a treat for the sound of body, it was only the wealthy who could afford it, since the price remained prohibitive for quite some time. But from about 1700 on it was a popular drink among rich and poor, and in present-day Holland it is drunk at breakfast, in many homes also in the late afternoon, and in every home again at night, when the lady of the house presides over the tea tray with a solemnity that impresses a stranger and makes him wonder, is this a meal or a ritual? Coffee became an equally favorite beverage with the Dutch, who made it the special drink for the midday meal; hence the Dutch equivalent of the word luncheon is coffee. A Hollander who invites a friend to come and drink coffee at his house gives him an invitation to the lunch.

Thanks to some of the genre painters such as Pieter de Hooch, Johannes Vermeer, and Gerard ter Borch we can visualize the interior of a middle-class home of the seventeenth century. One entered it through a door that consisted of two parts, the upper half being capable of opening while the lower one remained locked, a safety device by which an intruder could be kept out. The visitor who was admitted stepped straight from the street

into the room, there being no lobby or vestibule. Only in the patrician mansions along the stately Amsterdam canals, which served as models for the homes of the rich in other cities, did the front door open into a spacious corridor that cut the house into two symmetrical halves. The labor that yielded the family's livelihood was performed on the spot, the workshop or office, the business storerooms, and the living quarters being all under the same roof. Children grew up with an intimate knowledge of their father's craft or occupation and were consequently easily induced to step into his shoes. The bedroom, in the simpler homes, served also as reception room. The beds were not in the way of the callers, for they were hidden in wall closets which were shut off by curtains or folding doors. Such closet beds are still in use in ancient farmhouses and in the fisher villages around the Zuider Zee and on the North Holland isles. Four-posters began to replace them in the seventeenth century, first, of course, in the more opulent homes.

Pieter de Hooch's bedroom scenes are perfect specimens of this typically Dutch genre. Most of them depict simple, middle-class interiors, but however modest the home, each single detail is a thing of beauty, because every piece of furniture and every implement and utensil was the product of an artisan's love for his craft. The lower part of the wall, in one of his pictures, is covered with Delft tiles, the washable, untearable, and thumb-proof picture book from which Dutch children learned their first Bible lessons and the rudiments of history and geography. The folding table by the wall, the jug on top of it, the two straight-backed chairs on either side of the door, the tiny windowpanes encased in lead, and the floor of glazed tiles form a pleasant harmony that finds response in the expression of happy content on the faces of mother and child. More than a century before this picture was painted Erasmus, who was not given to

praising his native country, proudly referred in his *Adagia* to the charm of Dutch homes: "Merchants," he wrote, "who have traveled through more than half the world admit that there is only one Holland in respect to neatness of furniture."

It was not, however, the kind of furniture one can relax in. Aldous Huxley has ingeniously argued that comfortable chairs and sofas could not develop until old-time formality was abandoned for the slack and easy manners of our democratic age. The master of past days who demanded deference and obsequiousness from his servants could not afford to loll in their presence. The two chairs in De Hooch's picture do not invite relaxation. You cannot recline in them. They can only be sat upon. Still, if Huxley is right, one might expect Holland to have been the first country to introduce comfort into the home, for nowhere in Europe, as we saw, were the differences in social status less clearly defined and stressed.

Neat furniture gave the women pride in their homes and industry to keep them clean and orderly. Spitting on the floor was common practice throughout Europe, except in the Netherlands. Sir William Temple, who was English Ambassador at The Hague in the sixties of the seventeenth century, was guilty one day of that breach of etiquette while dining at the house of Burgomaster Hooft of Amsterdam. He noticed to his embarrassment that everytime that he spat across his shoulder a servant girl hastened to mop it up. "Somebody at table speaking of my cold, I said, the most trouble it gave me was to see the poor wench take so much pain about it: Monsieur Hooft told me, 'twas well I escaped so and that, if his wife had been at home, though I were an ambassador, she would have turned me out of doors for fouling her house."

These Dutch women were good homemakers; still, house-keeping was not their sole concern. Many a wife could take

charge of her husband's business and do the buying and selling in his absence. "They are active," said Guicciardini, "with hand and tongue in affairs which properly pertain to the men, and attend to them with such skill and energy that in many regions such as Holland and Zeeland the men let the women settle everything."

They were capable even of pioneer work in the isolation of overseas settlements. When Jeremias van Rensselaer, the patroon of Rensselaerswyck in New Netherland, died in the year 1674, his widow Maria took charge of the administration of his vast estate. She had a brother living in New York, and what assistance he could offer her had to be solicited and given by letter. Their correspondence has been preserved in the New York State archives at Albany. These letters reveal her as a courageous, determined, energetic woman, in whom the man's work she performed had hardened all womanly grace. She never wrote to Stephanus van Cortlandt for the mere pleasure of writing; she discussed only business affairs, contracts, debts, claims, rents, litigation, labor troubles, disputes with impertinent farmers and quarrelsome neighbors. And while plagued with so many vexations, she had to cope with the handicap of a crippled body that had to be supported on crutches. She loved to complain in her letters to Holland about the burden of responsibilities that weighed her down, but when the Van Rensselaers at Amsterdam appointed a younger brother of her husband as director in her place, she strongly protested and wrung from her brother-in-law the concession that she should remain treasurer under him. He died soon after and the administration of the colony remained in her hands until she died in her forty-fourth year.

Such collections of letters by women are extremely rare in the Netherlands. I know of only one other, that of Maria van Reigersberch, the wife of Hugo Grotius. Her letters are precious

historical documents, precious not only because of the role played by her husband in history and the world of letters, but also because no other Dutch woman of the past has thus revealed herself in writing that was not intended for publication. She was an excellent mate for her learned husband who could not be bothered with the troubles and trifles of everyday life. She managed his household and him expertly and energetically. When he had been imprisoned for life, it was she who planned and engineered his escape in a chest that was supposed to contain his books. He made his way to Paris, where she promised to join him. When he wrote her apologetically that setting up house in Paris was expensive business, she replied, "You need not make any excuses for the expenses you have incurred; they are of the kind that do not come back every day."

Maria held the purse strings, and any extravagance on his part weighed on his conscience and had to be confessed and accounted for. After she had joined him in Paris, she traveled three times back to Holland — and traveling in those days was no pleasure for a lone woman — to look after their financial interests and to try to obtain permission for him to return to the fatherland. "Brother Campe," she wrote from there, "has promised to see to it that I get a man-of-war to take me where I want to go." Campe, her sister's husband, represented the States of Zeeland in the Admiralty of the province; Maria had pull and never hesitated to use it. But pulling and pushing do not enhance a woman's grace. When Grotius became Swedish ambassador at the French court, she had to do a lot of entertaining and had seventeen servants in the kitchen to look after. The affectionate helpmate turned into an imperious manageress, who wrote scolding letters to her sons and accused her husband of being a weak, indulgent father.

Her letters have slight literary value; Maria de Groot was not

a Dutch Madame de Sévigné. There are indeed flashes of wit and humor and occasional expressions of tenderness that are all the more touching because they seem at odds with so determined and unyielding a character. It is not in the Dutch nature to be effusive, and Maria was Dutch to the core. The amorous passion was a topic for poets but was not alluded to by men and women in their senses. A correspondence such as Dorothy Osborne exchanged with Sir William Temple was never carried on between two lovers in contemporary Holland; if there were, all traces of it were destroyed by relatives afraid of ridicule or scandal, for none has ever come to light. Sir William, who has written about the Dutch with such rare insight and understanding, said that "their tempers are not airy enough for joy, or any unusual strains of pleasant humor, nor warm enough for love. This is talked of sometimes among the younger men, but as a thing they have heard of rather than felt, and as a discourse that becomes them rather than affects them."

Dutch youths were not affected because they shunned with boyish shyness the company of girls. The Swiss naturalist, Albert Haller, who studied under Boerhaave at Leyden, noticed that "in the Netherlands the young men, as a rule, do not keep company with the fair sex. In Leyden drawing rooms one finds seldom more than one or two youths to twelve ladies. The manners of the men are often uncouth in consequence."

Love matches were the exception, not the rule. Marriages were arranged by the parents of the young people. Love was a fickle passion whose transports could not be trusted to steer the young couple into a haven of security and well-being. A dependable competence was a safer insurance of domestic happiness. The contentment it gave might engender love, whereas poverty and want were sure to destroy it. In this day and age young love



is proving a most unstable foundation for married life; our forefathers were apparently not mistaken in their unsentimental view of marriage as a business contract. Divorces, at any rate, were rare; the partners in a divided household did their best to keep up appearances and keep the family intact. They were assisted in their endeavor by the Church and the secular authorities. The consistory had authority to censure and to discipline those church members who did not lead a Christian life, and the opprobrium that attached to public censure deterred many a disillusioned soul from seeking satisfaction for frustrated longings outside the home. "Their women," said Sir William Temple, "live with general good fame; a certain sort of chastity being hereditary and habitual among them, as probity among the men."

The secular powers, too, provided props for the disintegrating household. There were official peacemakers, the commissioners for matrimonial affairs and quarrels, before whom husband and wife could bring their dispute in hope of reconciliation and settlement. Oliver Goldsmith has described the good work of these arbiters in an essay entitled, "Political Frugality." \* "If the parties come attended with an advocate or a solicitor, they are obliged to retire, as we take fuel from the fire we are desirous of extinguishing. The peacemakers then begin advising the parties by assuring them that it is the height of folly to waste their substance and make themselves mutually miserable by having recourse to the tribunals of justice; follow but our direction, and we will accommodate matters without any expense to either. If the rage of debate is too strong upon either party, they are remitted back for another day, in order that time may soften their tempers and produce a reconciliation. They are thus sent for twice or thrice; if their folly happens to be incur-

\* *The Bee*, VI, Nov. 3, 1759.

able, they are permitted to go to law, and as we give up to amputation such members as cannot be cured by art, justice is permitted to take its course." \*

The institution of these peacemakers is convincing proof that married life in those days was often less harmonious than the peaceful interiors painted by De Hooch and Vermeer would lead one to suppose. A masterful housewife may keep cleanliness and godliness under her roof but love does not care to dwell there. As Chaucer said, three hundred years earlier:

*Love wol nat been constreyned by maistrye.  
When maistrye comth, the God of Love anon  
Beteth his wynges, and farewell, he is gon.*

The women's desire for mastery was not restricted to the home; they loved to meddle also in public affairs and the politics of their country. Their hold on what men fondly imagine to be their own concerns was a tradition of long standing in the Netherlands. In the late fifteenth-century miracle play, *Mary of Nimmegen*, a woman takes such a passionate part in the political factions of the day that she commits suicide in a fit of despair over her party's defeat. The English dramatist Fletcher introduced into the *Tragedy of Sir John van Olden Barnavelt* a group of Dutch women who defiantly ask an English lady:

*Do you think ther's anything  
Our husbands labor for and not for our ends?  
Are we shut out of counsailes, privacies,  
And onely lymitted our household business?  
No, certaine, Lady, we partake with all,  
Or our good men pertake no rest.*

\* Goldsmith did not write from personal observation; he copied Voltaire without mentioning his source, "*Fragment d'une lettre sur un usage très utile établi en Hollande*" (1740).

Sir William Temple, at that same dinner party at which he was guilty of spitting on the floor, remarked he had heard it said that in Holland "the wife's governing was a thing established." His host, Burgomaster Hendrik Hooft, admitted that it was, and when another of the guests protested, saying Mr. Hooft was only jesting, the latter replied very briskly, "It was so, and could not be otherwise, for it had long been the custom, and whoever offered to break it would have banded against him not only all the women of the town, but all those men too that were governed by their wives, which would be too great a party to be opposed." \*

\* *Works* (1770), II, p. 458.

## CHAPTER VII

### UPON THE SEVEN SEAS

**W**IND AND water were the chief helpmates of the Dutch in the days when man had not yet learned to harness steam and electricity in his service. The wind blew into the sails of ships and mills and kept commerce and industry in perpetual motion, the water supplied the routes of conveyance. Railways and aviation have increased the speed but not the reliability of transportation. Travel between the cities of the Dutch Republic was well regulated and so confident were the magistrates of the punctuality of the service that in some city ordinances the skippers were ordered to refund the fare to the passengers when they failed to arrive in time at their destination.

Inland waterways were of three kinds: rivers, lakes, and canals, and the last ones steadily increased in number as more and more submerged land was reclaimed; for the water that remained inside the new polder was tied in the strait jacket of narrow ditches, which must serve in times of heavy rainfall as a provisional reservoir for the overflow. This surplus water is subsequently drained, through locks in the encircling dikes, into outside canals and canalized rivers, which, besides being the receptacles for superfluous polder water, serve as communication lines between the many towns and cities.

In the early seventeenth century the vessels plying between them were small sailing craft which were far from ideal means

of transportation. They could not hold much cargo, nor carry more than six or eight passengers, who often had to take to the oars in a calm or in a narrow canal where the sailing was hampered by lack of space. In the early thirties the *trekschuit*, a horse-drawn barge, superseded the wind-driven craft. The first barge canal with towpath was dug between Amsterdam and Haarlem in 1632, and such were the advantages of the one-horsepower *trekschuit* that by the middle of the century hardly any inland waterway was without its towpath.

Though the barge was no longer exposed to the whims of wind and weather, the passengers were, since they sat on the open deck aft, where the skipper at the helm had the pleasure of their company and conversation. He lost it in the early eighteenth century, when an improvement was introduced that pleased the travelers but not the skipper. The barges were supplied with a common room below deck, which served the same purposes as the American railway smoker does today. Its low roof created an atmosphere of cosiness and seclusion that encouraged conversation, and since it was the cause of this intimacy it gave its name to the low room. The travelers did not sit under the roof, they sat in it. *Roef* (pronounced roof) is the Dutch word for the common room in the *trekschuit*, and the pleasure the people found in the leisurely travel and the talk in the *roef* is evidenced by their referring to it with the diminutive *het roefje*. The skipper, left alone in the stern sheets when the weather was bad, was often tempted to come downstairs and join the company; that is clear from an ordinance of 1764 which forbade him to sit down in the cabin and monopolize the conversation.

*Trekschuit* talk was such a common feature of travel in the Netherlands that it gave rise to a special kind of political pamphlet. The writer, instead of giving his own opinion, presented

a fictitious group of travelers discussing a burning topic of the day. The *trekschuit* chat, like Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrimage, made all the world kin. Class distinctions were temporarily effaced; gentleman and common burgher, farmer and laborer, businessman and scholar, each had his say; and though the gentleman might be listened to with greater deference, none was made to feel that he should keep silent in the presence of his betters. Gerard Brandt, the biographer of Michel Adriaanszoon de Ruyter, describes a *trekschuit* incident that illustrates the freedom of speech that was claimed as a right by the common burgher. The admiral had to listen in the *trekschuit*, one day, to a scurrilous fellow traveler who in foul language kept railing against the government. Irrked by so much abuse he ordered the fellow to shut up and when the latter paid no attention, he asked the skipper to put him off. But the captain, being afraid, perhaps, lest he should have to refund the passengers' fares if he arrived behind schedule, was disinclined to stop the ship. The admiral, boiling with rage by this time, proceeded to silence the scoffer in a most effective manner: he lifted him bodily and threw him overboard.

*Trekschuit* travelers were not exclusively of the native population. The Dutch Republic, after the conclusion of the Spanish war, began to attract many foreigners who wanted to see this upstart commonwealth that was run by merchants who acted as the equals of hereditary rulers. "The great beauty of their country," wrote Sir William Temple, "draws every day numbers of curious and idle persons to see their Provinces, though not to inhabit them. And indeed, their country is a much better mistress than a wife, and where few persons who are well at home would be content to live, but where none that have time and money to spare would not for once be willing to travel."

It was not the natural scenery that drew these foreign sight-

seers. The glory of the Netherlands was a work of art created by man in defiance of nature. "England," said Sir William, "shews in the beauty of the country what nature can arrive at; so does Holland, in the number, greatness and beauty of their towns, whatever art can bring to pass."

An Amsterdam publisher brought out in 1689 a guidebook under the garrulous title, *Travel Book through the United Netherland Provinces and the regions and kingdoms contiguous thereto, containing an accurate description of the towns as well as a schedule of trekschuit and stage coach runs, and in addition information concerning the best hostels in each town, with various other things that in traveling are useful and deserving of notice, the whole having been assembled with great labor.*

This early precursor of Baedeker starts off, most unBaedeker-like, with a lengthy prayer to the Trinity for protection against the dangers of the road — murderers, brigands, poisonous vapors, disease, combat, and all sorts of mishap. Most owners of the book will have read it — if they read it at all — with a lighthearted smile; the air was just as likely to be poisonous in their home town, disease was no monopoly of any nation, and brigands were adventurers of whom only those Dutchmen had personal knowledge who had visited Italy. Travel in the Netherlands, at any rate, was not exposed, around 1700, to such dangers as are anticipated in this prayer, which reflects the conditions of a century earlier.

The book itself stresses the safety devices that Amsterdam had taken to keep its burghers and visitors from drowning in its canals or being burned in their beds. The author mentions with pride among the noteworthy sights of the city the street lights and the fire engines. All the 2400 lanterns were lit on moonless nights at the same time and went out again simultaneously, the oil supply being adjusted to the duration of the

darkness. No wonder the need for such a system was felt to be an urgency in this Venice of the north. On dark nights the canals were treacherous pitfalls in which many a belated pedestrian had found an untimely grave before the erection of the lampposts. Both these and the fire engines were invented by Jan van der Heyden, who is remembered nowadays as an excellent painter of landscapes and city views rather than as an ingenious lamplighter and firefighter. In his own lifetime those safety devices were his chief glory. There were artists galore in Amsterdam; there was but one man whose fertile brain could turn night into day and could extinguish fires, to quote the guidebook, "with long, pliable pipes or snakes with which one can pass through the crookedest alleys and winding staircases to reach with a mighty spray of water the deepest and highest spots, even the tops of the loftiest towers."

Amsterdam, it is clear from the guidebook, was connected by water with nearly every town and village in the Netherlands. Inland navigation was under the strict supervision of the authorities. The ships' masters needed a government charter to operate, were obliged to belong to the guild of inland skippers, and were subject to the regulations controlling the service. They were appointed by the burgomasters of one of the two towns between which they plied; probably the town that had started the line possessed the right of appointment. This one-sided arrangement was a cause of frequent friction. In 1646 the Amsterdam burgomasters, being dissatisfied with the manner in which the town of Leeuwarden in Friesland ran the line to their city, established one of their own; but they could not compel their Leeuwarden colleagues to admit the rival. The intruder was not allowed to moor his ship at the quay, and the Amsterdam rulers, who were accustomed to seeing their will obeyed throughout the province of Holland, could not make those stubborn Frisians



toe the line. They had to withdraw their own boat and leave the line in the hands of the Leeuwarden magistrates. A sensible solution to the dispute would have been to let both towns appoint an equal number of skippers, and this was actually the way in which most of these intercommunal squabbles were settled.

One-horse power that carried cargo and passengers over long distances was a cheap way of transportation. The *trekschuit* could hold much more than a cartload and was not liable to breakdowns such as wagons often suffered on ill-kept, deep-rutted country roads. Still, overland travel was not uncommon in the Netherlands, and on the routes between the principal cities, where the roadbed was properly hardened, the stagecoach could keep up the competition with the canal barge because of its greater rapidity. In the eastern provinces along the German border, where the ground rises above the level of the land along the seacoast, transportation was chiefly by cart and wagon, and also, in the last decades of the century, by mail coach. Even in the water-crossed western provinces the mail coach became a much-patronized conveyance. It used to follow the main road, whereas the *trekschuit* often steered a tortuous course, taking detours to avoid payment of tolls, a device that could be resorted to almost anywhere, thanks to the ubiquity of canals and ditches. Hugo Grotius wrote an eloquent plea for international freedom of the seas, but in his own country there was no freedom on its inland waters. Skippers were hampered right and left by all sorts of exactions from towns and private landowners responsible for the upkeep of dikes, locks, and bridges; and the avoidance of these payments by a circuitous route slowed up the *trekschuit* service to the benefit of the stagecoach.

Private carriages did not come into use before the seventeenth century, several decades after they began to crowd the streets

of London. It was a Dutchman, though, called Willem Boonen, who first built coaches there in 1564. He was appointed Her Majesty's coachman and proudly occupied the box seat of his own creation when Queen Elizabeth went for a drive. Toward the end of the century there was a great trade in coaches in London as the nobles were eager to follow the royal example. The impoverished nobility of the Netherlands could not afford the luxury, and the new city-bred aristocracy did not feel the need of a coach until they became owners of country homes in the polders or, later on, on the banks of the Vecht. Private vehicles became a serious traffic problem in the narrow streets of the Dutch towns, so much so in crowded Amsterdam that the city court forbade the use of them; but since the wealthy rulers were the owners of these public nuisances, the ordinance was never strictly enforced. They needed them to travel back and forth between town house and country place; so it was ruled that a carriage coming from outside the city might proceed unhindered on condition that the driver took the shortest way home; hence any carriage on the streets was assumed to have just entered the city.

On the inland waterways the youth of Holland and Zeeland got their first thrill of navigation. A trip in the *trekschuit* was for many a little boy the beginning of a seafaring career. To pass from the canal barge onto a seagoing vessel, to change the watery groove through the low pasture land for the trackless ocean was the ambition of many a young Dutchman. Jan Huygen van Linschoten, one of the great navigators of the late sixteenth century, wrote to his parents, "Day and night I think of nothing else but travel in foreign lands; . . . there is no worse waste of time than for a young fellow to hang around in his mother's kitchen like a dolt who is ignorant of what there is to be seen in the world." "East West Home best" is the popular

saying, but the sentiment must have originated with old and disillusioned men. The young did not agree with it. They went not only east and west, they sailed as readily to the Arctic and the tropics. Still, north and south do not figure in the proverbial lore of the Dutch. The saying must date from that early period when Dutch commerce still hugged the coasts of western Europe and shuttled back and forth between east and west, that is, the harbors of the Baltic and Portugal. For they called the trade with the countries around the Baltic Sea the eastern trade and that with England, France, and Portugal the western trade.

Early map makers placed the map of the Netherlands with the coastline facing north, their modern successors make it face west; in other words, the projection on the page has been turned round to the left a full quarter of the dial. A modern school child learns to call west and east what was south and north to his forebears; yet many topographical names that he must learn by heart are intelligible only in the light of the early map-makers' wisdom. On present-day school maps the North Sea appears west of Holland, and the Zuider Zee, which means southern sea, appears east; on the old maps their positions are in accordance with their names. When a burgher of Leyden walks out of the city in the direction that the modern cartographer calls west, he leaves it by a street called Noordeinde (north end); The Hague counts among its chief thoroughfares a Westeinde (west end) which in the modern school atlas is shown to run south; and the sea which the Dutch call Oostzee (east sea) is not to be looked for in the Orient but is none other than the Baltic.

The expansion of Holland's trade was aided at an early period by her inclusion in the Burgundian realm. The power and prestige of the sovereign who bore among his many titles that of Count of Holland and Zeeland secured for the merchants of

these provinces advantages abroad such as they could not have obtained by their unaided efforts. In 1496 Duke Philip the Fair concluded with King Henry VII of England a treaty called Great Intercourse, under which equal rights in either realm were granted to the subjects of both princes, a concession from which the Dutch derived the greater benefit since their merchant fleet far outnumbered the English. It was for that reason often criticized in England and bitterly assailed both in print and in parliamentary debate; yet it remained in force for fully one hundred and fifty years. Another windfall came Holland's way when Philip's son and successor, Charles V, granted Dutch traders in his Spanish domains such rights as were enjoyed by native merchants.

Thus favored, the Hollanders, owners of ships that were built for capacity rather than speed, and manned by crews that were content with the simplest fare, were enabled to outstrip all their rivals. The Hansa gradually receded, the Portuguese and Spaniards, concentrating their efforts on the Indian trade, withdrew from the European scene so completely that they became dependent for many commodities on Dutch importers; and the English alone remained in the field to offer the Dutch competition. Contemporary English writers admitted that they put up an ineffectual fight. Said one, who signed himself Tobias Gentleman, "Two of his Majesty's counties, Suffolk and Norfolk, do equal, if not exceed, in spaciousness all their provinces, and yet it is manifest that, for shipping and seafaring men, all England, Scotland, France, and Spain, for quantity of shipping and fishermen, cannot make so great a number," and Sir Walter Raleigh complained, "The Low-Countreys have as many ships and vessels as eleven kingdomes of Christendome have, let England be one, and build every year neer one thousand ships, and not a timber tree growing in their own countrie." Both

men were anxious to prod their countrymen into greater activity and used exaggeration to sharpen the goad, yet the statistics of the navigation through the Danish Sound show that they did not lay it on overthick.

The Baltic and the coast of Portugal ceased to be the limits of the east-west trade after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Spanish sea power collapsed and the merchant fleets of Holland and Zeeland henceforth sailed the seven seas without much hindrance from the enemy. By an ironic twist of fate Dutch shipping that owed its rise in part to the protection of the Spanish Crown now used its strength to weaken and humble Spain. Dutch greed and lust for adventure sought ever farther goals. They began to equip their merchantmen for longer voyages, to the Mediterranean, the Arctic, the Americas, and around the Cape of Good Hope to the fabulous Indies. The products of all parts of the world poured into the warehouses of Amsterdam: grain from the lands on the Baltic, peltry from Russia, timber from Norway, sperm oil from the Arctic, wines from France, sugar from Brazil, salt from France, Portugal, and the West Indies, beaver skins from North America, spices from the East Indies.

Every student of the history of navigation is acquainted with the publications of the Hakluyt Society, and one need not be a specialist in the field to enjoy the contents of those volumes, early accounts of adventurous voyages into distant and unexplored parts of the world. There is a similar society in Holland, the *Linschoten Vereeniging*. It takes its name from Jan Huygen van Linschoten, from whose letter to his parents a part has been quoted previously. He was among the first Hollanders to visit, in Portuguese employ, the possessions of Portugal in India. He revealed in the *Itinerario*, as he called it, of his travels the inner weakness and disintegration of Portugal's colonial empire. That

publication became a guidebook to Dutch navigators and merchants who were eager to emulate the Portuguese in the Orient. One of the volumes of the *Linschoten Vereeniging* contains a consecutive narrative, compiled by J. C. Mollema from a confusing mass of contemporary documents, of the first navigation of the Hollanders to the East Indies. It is a harassing account of noble courage thwarted by base passions and folly, of insurrection, sickness, death, lack of leadership, and hopeless discord. One wonders how even a small part of the expedition could have survived and returned to the fatherland to tell the story. Of the two hundred and forty-nine men who sailed from the Texel in April, 1595, only eighty-nine came back in August, 1597. Two-thirds of the crews had marked with their dead bodies the long sea route around the Cape of Good Hope.

The expedition comprised three ships called the *Mauritius*, the *Hollandia*, and the *Amsterdam*. The nine Amsterdam merchants who financed the enterprise had named them thus in recognition of the aid and encouragement received from Prince Maurice of Orange, the States of Holland, and their own city. A small pinnace of no more than twenty last accompanied the fleet as an advice boat. She was given the name of *The Dove*, as if the directors of the company were anxious to stress the peaceful intentions of the voyage. Commerce with the Malayans, not war with the Portuguese, was its aim. This did not please the crew, who could hardly be restrained from attacking a fleet of homebound Portuguese ships off the west coast of Africa, but the company's orders were peremptory: no piracy, no fighting. This belligerent spirit was soon dampened by disease. The scurvy began to exact its toll, and the logs became a monotonous record of dead bodies thrown overboard. On the first of October, 1595, there were scarcely twenty men on the four ships who could stand on their feet, and even they were not their usual sturdy

selves. The healing effect of fresh fruit was not unknown to them, and it illustrates their dire need of wholesome victuals that the ship's council was willing to barter the lives of two doomed convicts for a supply of oranges and lemons. These two had been found guilty of repeated insubordination and were condemned to be put on shore, with the promise, however, that they would be taken back on board and reprieved, if after five days on land they had gathered a supply of the coveted fruit. But they were never seen again.

A little island off the west coast of Madagascar, where they buried many of their dead, came to be known by the name of *Hollandsche Kerkhof*, Dutch cemetery. There was among others the grave of the skipper of the *Hollandia*. His death was followed by the outbreak of a bitter feud between the two commercial leaders of the expedition, which came near to wrecking the entire enterprise. The Amsterdam directors had devised a democratic form of government for their fleet of four ships. Though the *Mauritius* was recognized as the flagship, her captain had neither the title nor the authority of an admiral. Supreme command over the fleet as a whole was vested in the ship's council, consisting of the four skippers and the *commiezen*, who were the commercial leaders of the expedition. Cornelis de Houtman, as *opper-commies* or chief merchant, sailed on the *Mauritius*, *commies* Van Beuningen, next in authority, on the *Hollandia*. Each favored a candidate for successor to skipper Dignums of the *Hollandia*. Van Beuningen, usurping the rights of the ship's council, broke open the sealed letter from the directors stating their choice of a substitute for Dignums in case of the latter's death, and finding that it coincided with his own, he promptly inaugurated his favorite with the accustomed ceremonies. The ship's council, incensed by this arbitrary conduct, used its right of overriding the directors' choice by a

majority vote, ordered Van Beuningen's transfer to the *Mauritius*, away from a crew among whom he was popular, and put the chief merchant De Houtman in charge of the *Hollandia* with a skipper of their own choice.

The disciplined merchant made a humble show of submission, biding his time to take revenge. He saw his opportunity on Christmas Day, 1595, and promptly seized it. De Houtman and the new skipper of the *Hollandia* had left their ship to celebrate Christmas on the pinnacle; the sloop that had taken them there was intercepted by Van Beuningen and forced to take him along to the *Hollandia*. As soon as he had arrived on his old ship, he took command and dared De Houtman to oust him a second time, and the latter, knowing that Van Beuningen had threatened to shoot him if he came on board, meekly returned to the *Mauritius*.

During the months that followed, De Houtman was busy gathering evidence against his rival, and when the fleet was within sight of the islands they were heading for, Van Beuningen was summoned to the *Mauritius* to face his accuser. De Houtman charged him with a plot against his life and with a traitorous scheme to steal away with the *Hollandia* to Malindi, north of Zanzibar. The ship's council, deeming the man's half-hearted defense an admission of guilt, condemned him to incarceration. He spent eight months in *het gat* (the hole) while the deck above him was blistering in the tropical sun. On the last day of February, 1597, he was let out of prison and given freedom of movement with handcuffs on, under strict orders not to converse with anyone.

By that time De Houtman had lost prestige with his men. On Christmas Day, 1596, the skipper of the *Mauritius* had died suddenly, and De Houtman, on suspicion of having poisoned him, was seized by the crew and put in irons. The ship's council,



however, had released him as there was no proof whatsoever of his guilt, but the suspicion stuck to him for the duration of the homebound voyage. Thus the two enemies spent many months in close company, one a handcuffed, dumb-stricken convict, the other an alleged murderer.

Most probably neither was actually guilty. The two men were probably suffering from the disease which in Malay is called *bosen*, an instinctive dislike between two persons developing into a maniacal hatred when close and protracted proximity, under trying, nerve-racking circumstances, makes life well-nigh unbearable. The authorities in Amsterdam seem to have been of that opinion. They did not press the charges, and both men sailed again for fresh adventure, to meet death at almost the same time, in 1599, at the hands of assassins, De Houtman in Sumatra, Van Beuningen in Chili. They were brave pioneers in an heroic age, and, whatever their faults, they deserve the respect and gratitude of their countrymen, for whose colonial empire they laid the foundation stone.

The loss of ships and lives was no deterrent. De Houtman's expedition was followed by others. At the turn of the century so many upstart companies were competing for the East Indies trade that Johan van Oldenbarneveldt stepped in and persuaded the rival concerns to pool their several interests in an East India Company, lest cutthroat competition should prove their common ruin. In 1602 the States General granted the merger a charter for twenty-one years, which gave it a monopoly of trade with all countries east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Strait of Magellan, with powers of sovereignty throughout that region of the globe, including the right to wage war and conclude peace.

This consolidation could, and did effectively, safeguard the financial interests of the merchants concerned; it did nothing

for the sailors who were to risk their lives in its service. The ships that sailed from Holland every year in the track of De Houtman carried a crew twice as large as was actually needed, for the directors of the Company counted on the loss of fifty per cent of their men. Even the most robust constitution found it hard to thrive for a year on the monotonous diet of dried meat, salted fish, and hard biscuits that was the common fare on board ship. It was finally realized that a halfway port of call, where the sick could be cured, was badly needed. The site that was selected was on Table Bay, at the Cape of Good Hope, and here, in 1652, a settlement was made that was the origin of Cape Town.

In its early days this settlement was little more than a re-victualling station for East Indiamen, a Tavern of the Seas, as it has been called, where the ships could take in fresh vegetables and fruit from its gardens and fresh meat from its livestock. The landlord in charge of it was given the title of governor. Landlord would have been a more appropriate name, for although he was lord of a castle built by Jan van Riebeeck, the founder of the settlement and its first governor, and lorded it over a landed estate that kept expanding north and east until by the end of the eighteenth century it covered an area many times larger than the territory of the Republic, he was a landlord, too, in the socially degraded sense of purveyor of shelter and food to wayfaring people. *Groote Schuur*, once the country place of Cecil Rhodes and now the official residence of the Premier of the Union of South Africa, takes its name from the landlord's storehouse which originally occupied its site. For *Groote Schuur* means Large Barn, and the barn, not the castle, was the essential part of the settlement.

Van Riebeeck, settling down on Table Bay, never dreamed of conquest and expansion. He was satisfied with acquiring a

foothold where he could lay out a vegetable garden and find pasture for the breeding of livestock. He considered himself as a bird of passage choosing a resting place for his own species on their annual migration from the far north to the far south-east and vice versa. Ten days after landing he was already looking forward to the day when he could continue his voyage to Java. But against his will and intention he remained landlord in the Tavern of the Seas for a term of ten years. The bird of passage had made a nest and attracted others to the new habitat. The migrations to and from Java went on with increasing frequency, but every swarm that called for a while at Table Bay left loiterers behind that permanently joined the new South African stock.

Soon the Cape itself became the ultimate goal. From 1670 on, the East India Company encouraged the emigration of settlers to South Africa, offering free transportation to husbandmen and their families in return for a fifteen-years' contract and an oath of loyalty to the Company. Thus Cape Town became the fork where the sea-borne migration from the Netherlands branched in twofold direction, one half proceeding on east across the Indian Ocean, the other leaving the ship for the covered wagon and adventuring into the mountainous regions east of Cape Town. They were birds of many a feather, but chiefly of Dutch, Low German, and Huguenot stock.

The first to come were tillers of the soil, but by the end of the seventeenth century their labor produced more than the ships calling at Cape Town could absorb. Overproduction of crops made cattle breeding more attractive, and when in 1713 a cattle plague halved the colonists' livestock and the price of meat rose in consequence, the settlers began to seek pasture grounds farther afield, pushing the edge of the white man's area still deeper into the wilderness. From settlers they became

*trek Boers*, nomad breeders of cattle, who felt no attachment to the soil. The son would leave his father's ranch to seek new grazing for his stock, and the father himself would move on whenever rumors reached him of better pasture beyond. Thus a new race grew up of hardy, self-reliant individualists, who proved ungovernable subjects to the authorities in distant Cape Town. Their contact with that isolated outpost of European culture had been reduced to the rare occasions, occurring seldom more than once a year, when they took their wares — butter, lard, soap, candles, and hides — to the Cape Town market. The capacity of their oxcart prescribed the limits of their scant earnings. These intermittent visits stressed the differences that separated them from that little world of Company officials, tradespeople, and craftsmen, to many of whom Holland remained the land of promise and European life the model of their own. The *trek Boer's* home was the open veld, his land of promise the unexplored beyond, his mode of life the one that not tradition but nature's hard lessons had taught him. He longed for no return to the old world, he was the pioneer of a new world to conquer. The sole heirlooms of the past to which he clung were the Dutch Bible and the Dutch language, which, greatly simplified by the elimination of flectional endings, is still spoken throughout South Africa.

Nothing similar happened in Java which, in comparison with the sparsely populated South African wilderness, was a civilized and crowded island. Here the Dutch came into contact with a social organization that was profoundly different from their own. A teeming agrarian populace lived scattered in villages that were, socially and economically, self-centered units. What bond there was between them was formed by the authority of feudal lords who, in their turn, were united in obedience to the

power of the sultan. The courts of these potentates were the centers of Javanese culture. There ceremonial dances and a courtly literature were cultivated for the delectation of a leisurely class waited on by a retinue of bodyguards, slaves, and parasites. The rural population was required to deliver tithes, soldiers, and beautiful girls to the lords, and received in return a reflection of the magic power that each dynasty radiated. For the lords were known to be in contact with the gods and could through them offer protection against evils such as failure of crops, disease, and famine. The power of these lords was consequently unlimited because their right to it was never called in question. They did not need to use it for the improvement of their subjects' lot; if they cared, occasionally, for the building of a road, a bridge, an irrigation works, they did not perform a governmental duty, but conferred on their subjects a princely favor.

Only along the coasts did the Hollanders find conditions that reminded them of Europe. Here, at the mouths of wide rivers, were small harbor towns under the rule of petty princes. These towns had international contacts with the coasts of India, China, Japan, and took part in commercial activities that covered the vast expanse of the Far East. But the merchants who engaged in this international trade did not occupy the social eminence of their Dutch and English confreres. They formed an inferior class that had no social contact with the ruling elite made up of the harbor princes and their high officials. The princes' revenue came from tolls, harbor dues, exactions, and piracy.

A society so constituted was impervious to stimuli that could rouse it to social change and progress. Even the impact of alien cultures on its lethargy did not disturb it. Neither the Hindus who first conquered and colonized large parts of the archipelago, nor the spread of Islam in the late Middle Ages, nor Roman

Catholicism imported by the Portuguese could alter the essential character of this island civilization. And Protestantism represented by the Dutch was equally ineffective.

The Hollanders attempted at first to transfer their own ways of life to the tropical sphere. The homes they built for themselves in Batavia were copies of those they had left behind in the fatherland and stood mirrored in canals they had dug for drainage purposes. The Dutch burghers strolled through the sun-scorched streets in the clothes they used to wear in Holland. Jan Pieterszoon Coen, who was the founder of Batavia and the pioneer of Holland's colonial expansion, even tried to transplant the austere morality of Calvinism to the new Dutch town in the tropics. Adultery, he ruled, was to be punishable with death and confiscation of property.

But Calvinism languished in the tropics. The Dutch merchants were out for commercial profits; they had no ambition to act as apostles of Calvinist culture, of which they themselves were but specious representatives. In order to attain their commercial aim, they had to adapt themselves to the feudal society whose riches they coveted. Trading with princelings, they assumed the manner and the grandeur of feudal lords. Dutch burghers from simple homes in Holland, who rose to power in the service of the Dutch East India Company, lived in Java in grandiose style. Cornelis Speelman, one of Coen's ablest successors as governor general, was buried at Batavia with funeral pomp such as attended the obsequies of European princes. Civil and military officers walked in the procession carrying the paraphernalia of their exalted chief, one his shield, the other his coat of armor, a third his helmet, the fourth his sword, the fifth his spurs, as if they were planning to reconstitute the dead warrior in his tomb.

When the Dutch came to Java they found the Portuguese

language spoken there among the Arabs, Chinese, and other Orientals with whom they did their trading. Instead of insisting on the use of Dutch, they adapted their speech to that of their customers and did all their transactions in Portuguese. That was from the merchants' point of view good policy. They came to trade, not to found a Dutch empire. An employee of the East India Company published in 1718 a Portuguese-Dutch dictionary for the benefit of the Dutch who had dealings with "Arabs, Chinese, Orientals, and other pagan nations." In his preface he states that in the churches at Batavia God's word was proclaimed in Portuguese. The realistic Hollanders reasoned that there was no use in teaching the gospel in Dutch if one wanted to attract to the services Eurasians and Orientals who had no knowledge of that language.

A French critic of Dutch colonial administration sees in this prevalence of Portuguese in the days of the Company clear evidence of the seventeenth-century Dutchman's indifference for his native language. The inference is wholly unwarranted, as is proved by what happened at the Cape of Good Hope. There all foreigners — Germans, Scandinavians, Frenchmen — who settled at the Cape in the Company's service were compelled to adopt the Dutch language. In Java the Hollanders were the sole Europeans. They did not come there with the intention to remain. As soon as they had feathered their nests, they would fly back to a more congenial nest at home. There was no need to teach Dutch to the Javanese. The mixture of Portuguese and Malay that had served for a century, prior to the arrival of the Dutch, as the *lingua franca* of the harbor towns was the ready means of intercourse between the natives and the Dutch traders.

Although material gain was the motive that sent the Dutch to the Indies, there were men among them who in the midst of their commercial labors found time to go in pursuit of worthier

quarry. The story of the life and work of George Everhard Rumphius, a saga of Joblike resignation to misfortune and heroic achievement, proves that commercialism may go hand in hand with scientific interest. This faithful servant of the Company, which employed him for half a century, devoted all his spare time to collecting and describing the flora, the fauna, and the minerals of the island of Amboina, a work of such accuracy and intelligent observation that today it is almost as new and important as when it was published two centuries ago. In 1670, Rumphius went totally blind, but the Company supplied him with helpers who wrote down what he dictated and drew the pictures he could no longer design himself. Four years later he lost his wife and daughter in an earthquake. But the measure of his trials was not yet full. In a fire that laid the entire Dutch section of the town of Amboina in ashes his books and collections were destroyed. The manuscript of his principal work *Het Amboinsche Kruidboek* (Herbal of Amboina) was saved by a miracle. The Governor General Camphuis sent him an able draftsman with whose aid, and that of his own son, Rumphius repaired the damage in a few years. In 1690 the first six books of his masterpiece were sent to Holland, but the ship that carried them was sunk by the French and the manuscript was sealed forever in Davy Jones' locker. Fortunately, Rumphius had a wise and cautious patron in the governor general at Batavia. Before entrusting the precious manuscript to the risks of the sea voyage, Camphuis had copied it with his own hand.

The history of the Dutch East India Company is not throughout a record of rapacity and heartless greed. Men rose to the top in its service who were far better than the Company's reputation. This head manager of a proud and powerful corporation copying his learned underling's manuscript lest it should perish in transmission is a memorable figure in colonial history.



Nineteen years after the East India Company was founded, the Dutch West India Company came into being. It was given a monopoly of trade with the west coast of Africa from the Tropic of Cancer to the Cape of Good Hope, with the west and east coasts of America and the islands between these two continents. Its charter stressed commerce and war as the chief aims of its founders, and referred to colonization only in passing. Willem Usselinx, the Antwerp refugee who had been its chief promoter, was bitterly disappointed by the modification of his original plan. Being a zealous Calvinist, he saw in the planting of Dutch Reformed colonists in America a means of spreading the gospel of Christ among the heathen and in the teaching of it in the Calvinistic manner a counterblast at the Catholic religion, which the Spanish and Portuguese were propagating in Central and South America. But the Company's directors were not religious zealots. They were willing indeed to go in for colonization on a modest scale, but not as gospellers and anti-papists. Only commercial considerations made them planters of overseas settlements. They realized that in North America they needed a fortified center for their fur trade, where the peltry could be stored till an opportunity offered for shipment to Holland. The island at the mouth of the Hudson River was found to be the most suitable location for the Company's trading post and storehouse.

There is little analogy, as a rule, between the birth of a township and the birth of a seaship. One starts up by accident like a weed by the roadside, the other is tended and watched over by experts like a hothouse orchid. By the time the township becomes conscious of itself and its people begin to take an interest in its origin, all recollection of its beginnings has faded. The first settlers had no other desire than to live and kept no record of how they started living. They left little else behind than oral

traditions to which each subsequent generation added legendary lore of its own making; and thus the annals of most cities begin with a romantic fiction of their founding.

New York is not one of these. The New Amsterdam that she was three hundred years ago had no accidental and haphazard growth. The plans for it were designed with the same painstaking care that contemporary shipwrights devoted to the building of seagoing craft. Twenty merchants, all members of the Amsterdam Chamber of the West India Company, sat down one day around the council table and drew up instructions for Crijn Fredericksz, just as they would instruct their shipbuilder on the plans for a new West Indiaman. Whatever shortcomings may be blamed on the Amsterdam directors, they were not guilty of carelessness and neglect. It would be no wonder if Crijn Fredericksz thought them meddlesome and finical and felt annoyed by their leaving him no discretion or leeway in the execution of his commission. His elaborate instructions prescribed the size, shape, and circumference of the fort he was to build on Manhattan Island, the width and the depth of the moat, the number and location of the gates, streets, and houses. There is no city in the old world whose genesis was so systematically planned.

The subsequent purchase of Manhattan by Peter Minuit was also part of the directors' elaborate blueprint. By that time the town of New Amsterdam had been laid out, the fort was building, the first colonists were settled. By that purchase the accomplished fact of occupation acquired a semblance of justice, which the directors at Amsterdam were anxious to lend to their enterprise. It was in obedience to their orders that Minuit paid in kind the value of sixty florins to the Indians.

The astonishing feature of that famous transaction was not the smallness of the purchase price but the fact that any sum was

paid at all. Minuit might have taken Manhattan by force of arms as many an island had been taken before. He introduced, under orders of his employers, an innovation in the methods of colonial expansion.

The Director General, as the Company's chief representative, was the political ruler of the new settlement. But since that company was a commercial body, the officer next to him in rank was the *commies* or supercargo, who kept an inventory of the Company's stocks and an account of its loans to the settlers. The executive power was vested in the Director General and his council. The latter consisted of the chief officers of the Company and the skippers of the Company ships who happened to be in New Amsterdam.

The directors had good reasons for ruling that the skippers should have a seat on the council. They thought of the young settlement under their patronage as of a ship under sail. The town that Crijn Fredericksz laid out would be as lonely on its distant island as a merchantman in mid-ocean. The uncharted land west of it was a heaving sea of grassy hills and wild woodland more mysterious and dark than the charted Atlantic. Envious rivals, Frenchmen and Britons, might attack the colonists as pirates attacked them on the voyage across. Big money and many human lives were invested in the new settlement, and the West India Company saw to it that they should be no less safe in their township than naval architecture and nautical discipline could make them on shipboard.

"Skipper under God" was the old Dutch phrase that gave expression to the Hollander's recognition of the captain's absolute authority. His will was law in the lonely community cut adrift on the ocean. There was no power above him except the Almighty. The shipowners, it is true, were his masters, but they were out of reach and an appeal to them from the skipper's

orders would not avail the recalcitrants among the crew. The skipper obeyed the owners' instructions as he saw fit. He could always plead the force of necessity in extenuation of his disobedience. Hendrik Hudson would never have reached the river that bears his name if he had faithfully lived up to the terms of his mission. The owners of the *Half Moon* sent him to sea to try the northeast passage along the Siberian coast to China and the Indies, under strict orders to return to Amsterdam in case of failure. He was on no account to try his luck in the opposite direction. But that is just what he did. Being skipper under God he followed his hunch, regardless of his masters' prohibition, and his disobedience won him everlasting fame.

Bold self-reliance was the skippers' second nature. They were accustomed to assuming responsibility, to giving orders, and to having them obeyed. They knew their way on the seven seas and made their rivalry feared by Spaniards, Portuguese and Britons. The very name skipper is evidence of the Englishman's respect for Dutch seamanship. For why do the English call the master of a ship a skipper? Why not shipper? Because they borrowed the name from the Dutch. Its adoption by the British, long before Hudson's day, was an implied recognition on their part of Dutch leadership on the high seas.

No wonder, then, that the directors in Holland entrusted their skippers with a share in the administration of the New Netherlands government. "In the early part of Stuyvesant's administration," says H. L. Osgood, "he was in the habit of calling captains of the company, when on shore, to a seat and vote in the council." But this was not an arbitrary action on Stuyvesant's part, but in accordance with the instructions drawn up for Willem Verhulst, the first commander of the settlement, who preceded Stuyvesant by twenty years. Verhulst's tenure of office was not of long duration. His own council found him guilty of

mismanagement and sent him back to Holland on board the *Arms of Amsterdam*. Her captain probably sat on the council when it ordered Verhulst's dismissal, and he was, as a matter of course, the bearer of a report on the case to the directors in Amsterdam. Through the skippers they were kept informed about the internal affairs of the colony; it was not safe for a company official on Manhattan to incur a skipper's enmity. The man who knew which side his bread was buttered on curried favor with these masterful despots of the sea.

One of these skippers under God gave his testimony about affairs at New Amsterdam not only to the Directorate in Holland but carried it before the tribunal of posterity. In 1655 David Pieterszoon de Vries published his memoirs when he was sixty years of age. His book is the story of a typical representative of Holland's merchant marine, rich in adventure and deeds of valor, and a unique source book for our knowledge of the early history of the city of New York.

De Vries belonged to a patrician family of the town of Hoorn, but he was a native of La Rochelle in France, where his father settled a few months before his birth. As he himself expressed it, he was conceived in Holland and delivered in France. La Rochelle was the chief stronghold of the French Huguenots, who were the natural allies of the Dutch Calvinists. Community of creed fostered commercial relations. The people of La Rochelle readily welcomed the merchants from Holland who brought wealth to their city and support to their cause. David was a staunch upholder of the Calvinist faith and we may be sure that his father was one of those fervent followers of the Reformed religion whose zeal and tenacity formed the backbone of Dutch resistance against Spain.

De Vries felt all his life an itch for travel and adventure. He married the daughter of a prominent family of Hoorn, but his

home could never hold him for long. After each return he started planning anew for the next enterprise. He had his armorial bearings printed on the reverse of his title page, with a clumsy piece of doggerel underneath, in which he boasted:

*On top of the open helm, to show that I did steer  
My ship across the globe, I bear a silver sphere.*

He had a high opinion of both his family and his calling. A merchant skipper was an important personage, much more important than the captain of a man-of-war. De Vries reveals the difference in social status between the two in a remarkable passage of his memoirs. The secretary of the Prince of Orange once offered him a commission as captain in the States' navy, but he replied that in his town it was not proper for sons and in-laws of patrician families to sail as captains, but that it was respectable for them to sail as skippers to the Strait. By the Strait he meant the Strait of Gibraltar. The *Straatvaart*, that is, the Strait trade, was in those days the common name for the voyage to the Mediterranean. But he did not despise navigation to the Baltic either, nor to the east coast of the Americas. It did not matter whither he went, as long as he was in command of a merchantman. But he thought himself too good for the navy.

It was not fear of warfare that prompted this preference of the Hoorn patricians for the merchant marine. It was due to their love of independence. The merchant skipper was his own master, especially when he was also the owner of the vessel under his command. As a naval officer he had to obey the orders of his superiors. David Pieterszoon liked to do his own fighting. That he was as fearless as any daredevil in the Dutch navy is clear from what he tells us on the second page of his memoirs. He sailed from the Texel on his first voyage as skipper under God. There were several other *Straatvaarders* waiting

there for favorable wind. He asked for permission to sail with them in convoy, but they would not let him join because his ship of two hundred last carried only eight cannon and a crew of no more than eighteen men, while the others were equipped with from sixteen to eighteen pieces. Being refused their company and assistance he commended himself to God and sailed alone.

When a man of his mettle, world-wide experience, and social importance returned to Holland from his latest voyage, he had much to tell that was worth hearing; and even now, three hundred years after he visited New Netherland, his opinion of that colony and of its administration carries weight. It is not a flattering picture that he drew. He saw with alarm and grave misgivings the gradual deterioration under the mismanagement of Peter Minuit's successors, Governors Wouter van Twiller and Willem Kieft. But the Amsterdam directors, in his opinion, were chiefly at fault. He blamed them for putting fools in command in New Netherland, who were not capable enough to serve as mere assistants in the East Indies. At Batavia no one became governor who had not proved his worth in the East India Company's service; there each was promoted according to his merits. But the West India Company appointed as masters over its colonists inexperienced men who had never learned to command. Rapacity was another charge he brought against the directors. They would not allow the colonists to trade for themselves. Its trade monopoly discouraged production. If the settlers might freely sell the fruits of their labors in foreign markets, especially in those of Virginia and South and Central America, the farmers would have an incentive to produce more than was needed for the settlement itself and for the ships that called at New Amsterdam. But the directors would not allow their colonists to prosper at the expense of what, in their short-

sightedness, they thought to be the mainstay of their own prosperity.

As a result the colony languished for lack of settlers. His visits to the British settlements at Jamestown and on the Connecticut River convinced De Vries that the Dutch West India Company was steering the wrong course. There he saw everywhere signs of energetic expansion. The English, it was clear, had no difficulty in planting colonists, while De Vries had to abandon his tobacco plantation on Staten Island because his partner in the venture, a cousin and namesake of his at Amsterdam, had failed to ship to him the colonists he had bound himself by contract to supply. The fellow seemed to think, he wrote bitterly, that colonies could be planted without men and money.

The quality of the British settlers also compared favorably with that of the Dutch. The English lived soberly, drank little, and punished drunkenness. In New Amsterdam, the liquor stores were numerous and did a thriving business. And Governor Kieft, instead of checking the flow of liquor, made intemperance fashionable by his own example.

De Vries did not try to account for the superior quality of the New England settlers. One might infer from his words that the English as a nation were the moral betters of the Dutch. But that, of course, is not the explanation. In New England homogeneous communities sprang up of earnest nonconformists who had come to America to live free from dictation by the Church of England. They brought with them the restraints and inhibitions that they had known and obeyed in the home country.

In New Netherland there was no national homogeneity. Governor Stuyvesant described the region under his rule as being slowly peopled by "the scrapings of all sorts of nationalities." There were naturally troublesome elements among these, who were apt to abuse, in this isolated outpost of civilization, the free-



dom from the restraints and conventions of Europe. In Holland life ran smoothly through straight-cut grooves and channels, as straight and placid as the ditches that make checkerboards of the Dutch polders. The Company directors designed for their colony a life on the same pattern and counted on the aid of the Dutch Reformed Church in keeping it within the traditional bounds. However, since the community on Manhattan numbered many of non-Dutch stock who were ignorant or scornful of conventions imported from Holland, the Dutch themselves became lax in the maintenance of social restraints that they saw disregarded or ridiculed by their fellows and neighbors. Hence the unfavorable impression the Dutch colony created in comparison with New England was not due to a greater amount of depravity among its settlers, but to a smaller degree of social restraint; and this, in its turn, was the result of lack of social cohesion due to the mixture of Dutch with aliens who reduced the curbs they were willing to tolerate to their common denominator, the few conventions they all respected from the start.

The pessimism of De Vries was fully justified by subsequent events. When the English attacked New Amsterdam in 1664, the settlement, undermanned and defenseless, was surrendered by Stuyvesant without an attempt at resistance. In Brazil the Dutch ousted the Portuguese only temporarily; when Portugal recovered her independence from Spain, she braced herself for the reconquest of her Brazilian losses, and the West India Company was forced to cede them again in 1661. Only the islands in the Caribbean and some fortified positions on the Gold Coast, West Africa, whence the Company shipped slaves for its West Indian plantations, remained in Dutch hands; and to these was added the colony of Surinam on the northeast coast of South America, which was ceded by the British in exchange for New Netherland.

The search for a sea route to the East Indies carried the Hollanders also to the arctic north. Hudson's voyage was a belated repetition of previous attempts to reach the Far East by way of the ice-locked sea north of Siberia. They all ended in failure, but the sacrifices they entailed were nevertheless not entirely wasted. The search was given up, but the crews that had been to the arctic went back for the whale hunt. The British Muscovy Company was the first to hunt whales around Spitsbergen in 1611, and the Dutch soon followed in their track. The British were determined not to tolerate any rivals in this region. King James I had presented the Muscovy Company with a monopoly that left no room for competition and empowered it to use armed force against all who attempted to infringe its rights. In 1613 the English appeared with seven ships off the coast of Spitsbergen, attacked all foreign interlopers, and drove them off their hunting ground. The shipowners in Holland clubbed together and obtained from the States General a monopoly for their North Company. British hostility was not their sole inducement to consolidation. That is clear from the wording of the charter, which mentions as an additional motive, "the preservation of the trade, which otherwise was in danger of being destroyed by confusion." Competition among themselves was as harmful to their interests as was the rivalry of the Muscovy Company. The North Company succeeded in overcoming both.

The island of Spitsbergen was the headquarters of the Dutch whalers during their seasonal sojourn in the arctic. They had a sense of proprietorship in the island, for it was discovered and named by one of their countrymen, William Barents, the leader of the expedition of 1596 that reached, and wintered in Nova Zembla. The North Company built an establishment there which the Dutch called Smeerenburg, that is, Blubber Town. Each city in the Netherlands that was a participant in the ven-

ture of the North Company had its own plant there, the technical name for which was *tent*. A detailed account of the life and activities of the whalers at Smeerenburg is contained in Zorgdrager's classic history, *The Flourishing Rise of the Ancient and Contemporary Greenland Fishery*, which was published at Amsterdam in 1720. The heyday of Smeerenburg was in the early thirties of the seventeenth century, when the place was annually visited by over a thousand whalers, not counting the many camp followers. The ships from Holland brought up double crews; those of skill, courage, and experience were assigned to the sloops that went out to kill the whale and tow them to the cookeries on shore; the others remained on land and were employed in cutting up the blubber, boiling down the oil, filling up the casks, and loading them onto the ships. In 1720, when Zorgdrager's book appeared, the town was in a state of decay. The foundations and ruins of eight or ten oil coppers and those of the warehouses were the dead remains of a once flourishing community. A party of British explorers who landed there in 1799 found little left except the scattered brickwork of a cookery furnace.

The British and American whalers gave a Dutch title to the chief harpooner which is proof of the prominent part that Hollanders formerly took in these fisheries. The thirty-third chapter of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* bears the curious title of "The Specksynder." Melville was aware of the origin and meaning of the word, but not knowing any Dutch he misspelled it. "The command of a whaleship," he wrote, "was not wholly lodged in the person now called the captain, but was divided between him and an officer called the Specksynder. Literally this word means Fat-cutter; usage, however, in time made it equivalent to Chief Harpooner." The correct spelling is *specksnyder*. Melville must have miscopied it from an old book, for in his

time it was no longer in use, at least not in that form. "In the British Greenland Fishery," he explained, "under the corrupted title of Specksioneer, this old Dutch official is still retained." This queer spelling reflects a change in pronunciation less radical than would seem at first sight. Dutch *specksnyder* was in former days, and is still locally, pronounced *specksneer*, and the only corruption that the title suffered in its transfer from Dutch speech into the mouths of British sailors was the substitution of *sh* for *s*, for the English spelling is clearly an attempt to reproduce the pronunciation *spekshneer*. In Murray and Bradley's *New English Dictionary* the word is duly listed and its etymology explained. Among the quotations there given is one from Kipling's *Seven Seas*: "Up spake the soul of a gray Gothavn 'Speckshioner." The apostrophe shows that he mistook the harpooner's title for an abridged form of "inspector." You can't blame a poet for not being an etymologist. But by this elevation of the Dutch blubber cutter to the rank of an inspector his native origin is undeservedly obscured. The *specksioneer* is a persistent reminder that there was a time when the Dutch led the whale hunt in the arctic north.

In spite of the rich returns of the Dutch East India Company, the fisheries and the carrying trade remained the principal sources of Holland's prosperity. The latter, however, was continually hampered by the countries that were served by the Dutch freight carriers: by Denmark, which arbitrarily raised the Sound tolls; by Sweden, which under Charles XI began to build up her own commerce and industries with protective measures; by England with her Navigation Act of 1651, which forbade the importation of foreign goods in other than English ships or ships from the country of origin; by France with protectionist tariffs which tended to be raised periodically. But the losses sustained by these reverses were compensated for by gains

in other fields of enterprise, in Spain and her colonies, and in Russia. After the peace of Westphalia, Spain became one of Holland's best customers. The Dutch traded even with her colonies, though they were closed to Dutch merchants. They found a way of circumventing that obstacle: they did business there under Spanish flag and Spanish firms.

In Russia the English and the Dutch were vying with each other for the good graces of the Czar. An English writer, Dr. Samuel Collins, for nine years court physician to Czar Alexei and author of *The Present State of Russia* (1671), charged that the Dutch carried on a vicious anti-British campaign in Russia by means of scandalous pictures and libelous pamphlets. But they did not put their only, nor their chief, trust in propaganda of that sort. The Dutch merchants had powerful helpers in high places, amongst others in Jan van Sweeden, a Hollander who had organized the postal service in the Czar's domains, as well as in another countryman called Gerrit Claessen, a descendant, no doubt, of Arent Claessen who in the previous century had been the emperor's apothecary and a favorite of the imperial family. And now and then, when difficulties arose, the States General would send a special mission to Moscow that would reinforce the weight of diplomatic argument with a load of magnificent presents.

Such an embassy, headed by Jacob Boreel, sailed in 1664 from the Texel. In the ambassador's suite was a young man who had just finished his law studies at Leyden. He was not a member of the mission but went along at his father's expense to gain experience, to see the world, and perhaps to make personal contacts that might prove profitable to the family fortunes, for Nicolaas Witsen's father and grandfather had carried on, for more than half a century, a lively trade with Muscovy and Persia. The merchants of Amsterdam did not believe in the

search for pleasure for its own sake; they approved of the quest only if an increment of profit lent an air of solidity to the pleasure. Young Nicolaas was an earnest, studious boy, on whom the cost of the long journey was not wasted. He collected data about the Tartars and the Kalmuks which he afterwards turned to good account in his famous book, *Noord en Oost Tartarije* (*North and East Tartary*), a description of land and people not based on personal experience but on oral information and the study of books and maps. He kept a diary of his visit to Moscow which is, unfortunately, no longer extant. But an untidy copy of it has been preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, on which Dr. A. Kluyver has made a report to the Literary Section of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Amsterdam.

The Dutch embassy was lodged in the *posolsky dvor*, or envoys' palace, where they were practically prisoners, for they were under the never-relaxing surveillance of two *pristafs*, or commissaries, without whose company neither the ambassador nor any member of his suite were allowed to go out. The *pristafs* would not even permit young Witsen to receive a visitor who had undertaken to teach him Russian, nor could he obtain permission to inspect the rich collection of maps in the imperial library. "Being uneducated themselves," Witsen wrote bitterly, "they will not let anyone else study either." They behaved and had to be treated as children. They were always begging for presents and moped and complained when the gifts were not to their liking. Each slandered his colleague behind his back. In short, the two *pristafs* lacked all semblance of self-respect and dignity. "Treat them rough," was Witsen's conclusion. "That is the only way to make them behave."

Witsen accompanied the ambassador to court when he was received in audience. "The Emperor," he wrote, "sat almost in the corner of the room, on a small dais which one mounted by

three gilt steps. He wore a caftan and over it a robe with sleeves stiff with gold and jewels. On his feet he wore yellow boots. All his fingers, except the thumb and the middle one, were covered with rings set with diamonds, rubies, and other precious stones. On either side of him stood two young powerful *knyazes* or princes, handsome fellows wearing high caps made of white foxes' skins. They stood still like statues, never moving an eyelid. Their faces were so white I feel sure they had used paint. His Majesty is very corpulent and fitted closely into his chair. He has a fine face, white complexion, and grows a big round beard. His hair is brownish black, his hands are coarse, flabby, and fat." After the ambassador had made his presentation, one of the *knyazes* had to speak in reply. His tongue got caught as in a trap when he came to the name *Staten Generaal*. His frantic efforts to free it started everybody laughing. Even the emperor covered his mouth with his hand to hide his chuckle.

Some time later, on Good Friday, Witsen saw the Czar walk in a procession dressed, in sign of mourning, "in a dirty tunic of liver-colored camlet, his hair disheveled and tied up only with a red ribbon." He was very much impressed by the emperor's piety and was told by the First Chancellor that the Czar was well read in the Scriptures and loved to discuss biblical problems. He was also interested in modern science and foreign languages but would not have his children instructed in them for political reasons.

One of these was Peter, who was to succeed Alexei and to earn for himself the epithet The Great. His father's anxiety to keep Western influences away from him were of no avail. For it was Peter who invited the aid of Western science to build up a new Russia. He came to Holland to study shipbuilding in the year 1697. By that time young Nicolaas Witsen had become one of the most powerful men in Amsterdam. He was a burgomaster

of his city and an authority on the history of ship architecture. He had written a voluminous book on the subject and illustrated it with drawings from his own hand. Witsen, therefore, was the very man to act as Czar Peter's adviser when he came to Holland.

At Zaandam, an old shipbuilding center, they still show sight-seers the little house where Czar Peter lived as a shipwright's apprentice. The fabulously wealthy despot who came to Holland to live and work among ship's carpenters soon became a legendary figure. He was the talk of the country and the hero of folk tales. One day, the story goes, he called in his workman's clothes at the house of an Amsterdam burgomaster. The servant girl who answered his knock looked in dismay at his dirty boots and ordered him to clean them on the scraper by the door before he entered. The Muscovite despot, amazed at being given orders by a domestic, said, "Do you realize who you are talking to? I am the Czar of Russia." "I don't care who you are. Even if you were God Almighty, I would not let you pass in those dirty boots."

This may be pure fiction, but the picture is true to life. It offers a shrill contrast to the observation which the girl's master as a young traveler in Russia noted down in his diary. "All Russians are slaves," he wrote, "except the Emperor. Even the nobles at court, the Czar's father-in-law not excepted, call themselves, when addressing the Czar, his slaves." The despot cannot have admired a social order that permitted a servant girl to bawl him out and would not let him cane an impertinent valet, nor could the free burghers of Holland admire the Muscovite regime that held the entire Russian nation in serfdom. But their abhorrence did not prevent them from exchanging diplomatic courtesies with the tyrant in the Kremlin if these could benefit the commercial interests of Holland.

Thus Amsterdam became the reservoir where all kinds of



commodities from all over the world were collected and from which they were distributed again. It had the ship tonnage to do this and fought off competition by keeping the freight charges low. Insurance and storage were expertly organized, and the intricacies of international money transactions were simplified by an extremely efficient credit system. Payments for merchandise delivered abroad by Amsterdam dealers were made by the purchasers in the coin of their country; uncertainty as to the value of the foreign currency in reference to that of Amsterdam always caused much inconvenience and time-wasting trouble. In order to remedy that defect, the city of Amsterdam established by an ordinance of 1609 the municipal *Wisselbank* or Exchange bank, to which anyone might bring money or bullion for deposit. The ordinance required that all bills of six hundred guilders and over should be paid through the bank by the transfer of deposits or credits at the bank. Merchants from all over Europe kept accounts there and paid their bills with bank guilders or drafts on the *Wisselbank*. The city government guaranteed the safety of all capital that was entrusted to it; but it reserved for itself a monopoly, which put all private banks at Amsterdam out of existence.

In the late sixteenth century the millions earned in trade were used for expansion of business. There came a time, however, when the saturation point was reached and profits from business were turned to other uses. They were invested in real estate and stocks and bonds. The wealthy merchants became landed proprietors, withdrew from business, and made the government of town and province their sole concern. The enriched rulers, having broken the ties between commerce and government, tended to become a closed caste that kept the dealers of market and exchange outside their circle.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CITIZENS OF THE WORLD

**J**ANUS DOUSA is probably an unfamiliar name to most American readers, unless they retain a clear recollection of the pages that Motley devoted to the episode of the siege of Leyden. He played a hero's part in that historic tragedy. Nature had not intended him to be a man of action. The latinized name by which Jan van der Does liked to call himself is evidence that his inclinations were toward study and retirement. He was a nobleman by birth and a scholar by profession; he wrote Latin verse and edited classical texts; he was an authority on the early history of Holland and published an edition of a rhymed chronicle composed by a Dutch monk about the year 1300. There is a portrait of him in the Municipal Museum at Leyden, which shows him with his wife in the midst of their family of nine children. It was painted about 1592, when the perilous days of the siege were long past. Even the eldest children in the group do not seem old enough to have retained any personal recollection of the stress and strife that their parents had passed through. They look a serious family, though, as if the unremembered past had bequeathed to them an instinctive knowledge of the perils and vicissitudes of life and with it a bold determination to face them with their father's fortitude.

*Ante Omnia Musae* was Janus Dousa's favorite motto, but when his country was in danger he abandoned the Muses for a time and served Mars instead. He was a champion of Dutch

freedom from the very beginning of the revolt against the King of Spain, was sent by Prince William on a diplomatic mission to England to invoke Queen Elizabeth's aid, and was commander of the forces within the city of Leyden during the siege.

And having helped in saving Leyden with his sword, he served it no less devotedly with his pen. When Prince William decided to reward the city for its endurance with a university, Jan van der Does was foremost in helping to lay the foundations and the first to be appointed on its Board of Governors. And when the university library was established, Janus Dousa took charge of the books. It was a small but precious collection, to judge from an early print of 1610, which shows a double row of eleven one-shelf cases with reading desks underneath to which the books were attached by chains. Four arched windows on either side let in sufficient light to read by. Strange to say, the students, by the testimony of this early print, were allowed to bring their dogs with them into this sanctuary of learning. One loves to imagine Janus Dousa ruling here as librarian and finding peace among books after the stormy years of his early manhood. Those dogs disturb the tranquillity of that mental picture.

The wish to reward the city for the heroism of its burghers was not the only reason for establishing the new seat of learning at Leyden. An official proclamation of the States of Holland gave additional reasons for the choice: the ready food supply, the wholesome air, the convenient location, and the availability of suitable houses and buildings. This last item was indeed a consideration that carried weight. Americans accustomed to seeing a new college, fully equipped, rise out of the ground in a few years, will be amused by the account of the haphazard way in which Holland's first seat of learning was established.

No special buildings were erected for the housing of the young institution. There were several vacant monasteries within the

city walls that could serve the purpose. The convent of St. Barbara seemed to meet the requirements, and to judge from the accounts of student life in those early days, the name was not inappropriate for a building where young barbarians had to be taught the essentials of culture. Two years later, however, the university, for unknown reasons, removed its headquarters to the abandoned *beguinage*, and in 1581 it took possession of the former church of the White Nuns, of the order of St. Dominic, which is still its central building at the present day. The male sex invaded the quarters once occupied by women only, and for three hundred years the old church of the White Nuns remained closed to girl students. Not until the last decade of the nineteenth century were women admitted to the lecture rooms, and now they form so large a percentage of the student body that the spirits of the White Nuns must feel satisfied that their ancient rights to the building have been vindicated.

This beginning seems to have set a tradition, for as the school expanded it often utilized any building available rather than erect a modern structure at great cost. For Dutch alumni do not show their affection for the Alma Mater with handsome endowments such as have enriched the colleges and universities in the United States. Yet, the capitalists of the Dutch Republic were not closefisted misers. They spent their wealth liberally on charitable foundations, on orphanages, almshouses, and old men's homes. The university, however, seldom benefited by their munificence. Perhaps they had some misgivings about those learned professors. Universities are always and everywhere under suspicion of spreading dangerous radicalism. Woodrow Wilson once said that the use of a university is to make young gentlemen as unlike their fathers as possible. If that is so, one can understand why the wealthy merchants of Holland were reluctant to supply those learned remodelers of their male off-

spring with bigger and better means of transformation and preferred to provide them with a roof over their heads when they had grown too old and decrepit to do any harm.

Article 22 of the Statutes of 1575, the year in which the University of Leyden was founded, provided for the appointment of "two or three Patrons, Curators, or Supervisors, whose task it shall be to administer and look after everything that they, in conjunction with the Rector and his Assessors, shall consider necessary and useful for the welfare and prosperity of the university." Such patrons were known also at Pisa, Florence, Basle, Cologne, but nowhere except in Leyden was it ruled that the College of Curators, as the Board of Governors was, and is still, called, should have no competence whatsoever by itself, whereas together with either the city burgomasters or with the rector and his assessors they had more power than any similar body at other universities. Together with the burgomasters they appointed and dismissed professors, fixed their salaries, and administered the university's finances. This constant collaboration finally led to their fusion into one permanent body, which was officially recognized in the revised statutes of 1631. Thenceforth the burgomasters were as such members of the board of governors.

The revised statutes of 1631 regulated the functions that were entrusted to the curators in joint session with the rector and his assessors. The latter were chosen from among the professors and were the spokesmen of the faculty. The rector and assessors had to be consulted by the curators, but the latter decided what should be done. The College of Curators drafted university ordinances subject to the approval of the stadtholder and the States of Holland, appointed a secretary-treasurer of the university, and looked after details that no board of trustees would meddle with today, such as the choice of texts to be read in

class, the subject matter to be discussed, and the academic timetable. Since they held the purse strings, appointed and dismissed the teaching staff, and made decisions in all important matters, the curators were the absolute rulers of the university.

A striking instance of their absolutism is the case of Professor Donellus, who was dismissed by them in 1587. The assembly of the States of Holland requested the College of Curators to acquaint them with the reasons for this dismissal; but these refused to supply the desired information on the ground that they were in no way accountable to the States; and although the States of Holland had founded and endowed the young institution, they resigned themselves to being left in the dark. Two hundred years later, in 1788, the Donellus case was still cited, and proved valid, as a precedent by an equally arbitrary College of Curators. They remained until the end of the Dutch Republic the undisputed masters of the university and the staunch defenders of its autonomy and freedom.

The university was indeed an independent state within the State, with its own laws and with special privileges for its members. One of these was exemption from the excise on beer and wines, and registrations were sometimes made for no other purpose than to obtain that freedom at the cost of a negligible entrance fee. All who were enrolled were subject to the university's jurisdiction, except when they were guilty of a capital crime; the professors, on the other hand, were answerable to the Provincial Court of Holland. The university court of justice was made up of the Rector Magnificus and his assessors together with the city burgomasters and two *échevins*. There was no appeal from their verdict, which never was very severe. The common penalties were fines or incarceration; the severest punishment was banishment from the university.

Holland was envied by her sister states for the possession of

a seat of higher learning, and provincial rivalry soon led to the founding of similar institutions in each of the seven United Netherlands. Ten years after the opening of the Leyden school, the States of Friesland founded one in the town of Franeker "because neither the church of God nor political government can exist without learned persons." That of Groningen was founded in 1612. At Utrecht the municipal reformatory was abolished "because the expected fruits had not been produced," and the appropriations for it were given a new purpose: instead of helping wayward boys who did not care to learn they were turned over to a new academy for boys who sought the way to learning.

That learning was in many respects still medieval in character. Science in the Middle Ages had occupied itself with proving the accuracy of old truths, often in defiance of observation and experience. The steady growth of a self-asserting individualism encouraged a skeptical examination of these truths; the humanists of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries studied the classics in a different spirit from their scholastic precursors, not accepting their dicta as absolute verities, but drawing from them the material for a new philosophy and a new interpretation of life and the world. Erasmus was strongly aware of the stir of a renovation. "The world is coming to its senses," he wrote, "awakening as it were from a deep sleep. Yet there are still people who offer stubborn resistance, holding on frantically with hands and feet to their old ignorance. They are afraid lest, by the time good letters are reborn and the world becomes wise, they will be proved to have known nothing."

Good letters, *bonae literae*! The rebirth, he thought, was to come from books: Greek and Latin books, the repositories of ancient wisdom. The students read Latin, wrote Latin, and were lectured to in Latin. Cicero was the revered model they were

taught to imitate. The modern universities of the Calvinist Republic retained and cultivated the ancient language that the medieval Church of Rome had made the vehicle of international intercourse. Thus the learning dispensed in Leyden and its sister universities of the Republic was made available to students from all over the world. A cosmopolitan student body crowded the classrooms and many a famous scholar from abroad was induced to accept a professorship in Leyden since he could address them in the universal language of learning.

The great philologists of Leyden and Utrecht were famous for their excellent editions of the classics. They worked in the tradition set by Erasmus, without ever startling the world by the publication of an original and challenging doctrine. Their sole concern was to emend the ancient texts by a careful collation of manuscripts and, by means of their editions, to spread the knowledge of classical culture.

Leyden, however, allowed an invasion of the monopoly held by Greek and Latin by the study of Semitic letters: Hebrew and Arabic have been taught there ever since the early seventeenth century. The Dutch Calvinists had a deep veneration for the Old Testament and liked to think of themselves as the chosen people of their age, as dear to the Lord as the people of Israel had been in the days of the patriarchs and prophets. Holy Writ was studied by candidates for the ministry in the languages of the original. None was admitted to holy orders who could not show testimonials from his professors in Greek and Hebrew. When the synod of Dordrecht, in 1619, adopted a resolution calling for a translation of the Scriptures that was to be the official text of the Dutch Reformed Church, it was expressly stated that it should be made directly from the original Hebrew and Greek; and when the States General had voted the necessary appropriations, there was no difficulty in finding a sufficient number of



divines who were competent to undertake the work. The new version, the joint labor of twelve translators and twelve correctors, was completed in 1634. The States Bible, as it was called, became the treasured household book of every Protestant Dutch home, a source of comfort to successive generations, a model of style to Dutch writers, and a unifying force between the speakers of the various provincial dialects.

Uniformity of speech did not exist in the Republic. Netherlandish as a name for the Dutch language is but a recent coinage. It occurred for the first time in a Brussels book title of 1518. It was an innovation that must have seemed pretentious to the writer's contemporaries. The scholar who invented it wanted a name that denoted the linguistic unity of the inhabitants of the *Nederlanden*, the Low Countries, and the word that he coined was the best he could have chosen. He did not apply it, though, to the speech of all the provinces now forming the kingdom of the Netherlands. For him the Netherlands language was restricted to the provinces of Flanders, Brabant, Limburg, Zeeland, Holland, and Utrecht. In these, in the course of the late Middle Ages, a literary standard had developed that was not in use in Gelderland, Overijssel, Drente, and Groningen. These provinces were inclined to face east rather than west. They could not help being drawn into the German orbit, for geographically they were part of the Low German plain. The IJssel River and the Zuider Zee divided them from Holland and Utrecht, whereas no such natural boundaries hemmed them in on the German side. Gelderland, moreover, maintained its independence from Burgundian rule long after the dukes of Burgundy had gained a firm foothold in Holland, Zeeland, Brabant, and Flanders. Hence, the Duke of Gelderland, seeing in the power of Burgundy a menace to his own, looked east for support.

The provinces where Netherlandish was spoken were cul-

turally a colony of France, but French culture had not spread beyond the IJssel and the Zuider Zee. That difference, perhaps, caused a cleavage more profound than the estrangement due to geographical and political circumstances. To Flemings and Hollanders the inhabitants of the eastern provinces were no better than barbarians. Jacob van Maerlant, the leading poet of Flanders in the late thirteenth century, referred to them as "Wild Saxons." Knowing themselves despised by their neighbors on the west, they felt naturally drawn toward their Low German neighbors whose language was similar to theirs and whose culture was not any higher than their own.

Such was the state of affairs in the early sixteenth century. But in the revolutionary period that followed these Saxon frontier provinces were drawn into the vortex of the Netherlands war for freedom; and when the Dutch Republic emerged from the welter and developed into one of the great powers of western Europe, the Saxon frontier dwellers who had taken part in the struggle were not averse to sharing the fruits of Holland's victory. They turned away from Germany and began to face west. Dutch Calvinism, which had been the mainstay of the resistance against Spain, was also the most effective agent of Holland's eastward expansion. The town of Emden in East Friesland, as we saw, was a haven of refuge for the Calvinists from the sea provinces. The native population of East Friesland was first inclined to follow Zwingli; then they deserted Zwingli for Menno, the Frisian leader of the moderate Anabaptists; but finally, impressed by the growing power and prestige of Dutch Calvinism, they joined the church of the exiles living among them.

Since High German was the language of Lutheranism, the Calvinists of the provinces along the German border cut all ties with the empire. They sent their sons to the Dutch universities

of Groningen, Franeker, Leyden, and Utrecht. These boys brought the speech of Holland back with them to their native country and preached in it rather than in Low Saxon, which they felt to be a coarse and vulgar dialect. The minister who led the congregation at Jemgum from 1650 to 1674 was the last to use the native speech in the pulpit. By the end of the seventeenth century East Friesland and the other eastern provinces that bordered on Germany had to all intents and purposes become an ecclesiastical domain of the Dutch Republic. The States Bible was to the inhabitants a sacred symbol of their partnership in the Netherlandish community, and from it they learned to write Dutch as it was written in Holland.

It is not mere accident that the Netherlands has not produced philosophers of world-wide fame. Spinoza, though he was born and lived all his life in the Dutch Republic, was, as the son of a Jewish refugee from Portugal, neither physically nor mentally a son of the Dutch people. A Dutch professor of philosophy whose own reputation never exceeded the national scope attributed this dearth partly to the Dutchman's nature and partly to Dutch educational methods, which aim at a thoroughness that is apt to stifle originality. It would seem that the two causes are only one, since it is not likely that the Netherlander could have developed such thoroughness in the training of the young if it were not in his nature to be thorough. Thought cannot take flight into dazzling heights if it is forever concerned about precautions against the danger of being dazzled. Deductive reasoning is a non-Dutch method of approach. The Dutchman likes to build, in the realm of thought, upon solid ground. He relies on the evidence of experiment and fights shy of all theory that has no other foundation than the hunch of an inspired seer. Dutch scholars are like cautious mountain climbers who carefully prepare for their expedition, foreseeing all eventualities and guard-

ing themselves against them, charting their course in advance, and learning from the experience of others who adventured before them and failed. Thus they hope to attain to the summits of human knowledge and to peer into mysteries that reveal greater mysteries, for science knows no Ultima Thule. Truth is like the magic castle of Arthurian romance which always seems near and yet can never be reached. The knights errant of science are loyal comrades of an international round table; but they differ, according to their native character, in the choice of their equipment. The Dutchman does not mount the winged horse of Fancy. He is an unromantic knight who likes his errantry to be proof against erring.

That explains why the Dutch scholars who were discoverers and pioneers were nearly all active in the field of the exact sciences. Vesalius, Simon Stevin, Christiaan Huygens, Anthony van Leeuwenhoek, Johannes Swammerdam, Hermannus Boerhaave, all started from the dissecting room, the laboratory, or the observatory. Their achievements have become the common property of the learned world. The laws they first formulated are now the stock in trade of every student in the field, and the knowledge they imparted, not the books that they wrote, are remembered by posterity. The composer's symphony, the artist's picture, the writer's novel remain forever distinct evidences of their genius. The scientist's achievements are merged in the great mass of human knowledge, and the fame they possessed among their contemporaries shrivels to the mere mention of their names in the handbooks of the schools. Among the great of each nation the scholars lead the most unselfish lives. The fruits of their labors enrich, not themselves, but mankind, and their final reward is oblivion.

Take the case of Vesalius. How many among my readers are familiar with his name or can state what his achievements were?

Still, all modern knowledge of human anatomy and modern skill in surgery had their beginnings in his discoveries. Medical science in the Middle Ages was based on the wisdom of Galen; what he had taught did not admit of any doubt. *Galenus dixit*, Galen said so, was an argument that disposed of all opposition. Vesalius, at the age of fourteen, began to study anatomy under Jacques Dubois in Paris; but his inquisitive mind remained unsatisfied in that school. Dubois was a blind admirer of Galen and interpreted to his students the writings of that author rather than gave them demonstrations from the subject. A human body was never seen in his theatre; carcasses of dogs and other animals were the materials from which he taught. So Vesalius turned to the sole source of knowledge that was not poisoned by human error and prejudice: he stole corpses off the gallows. His ardent desire to know accurately was stronger than fear of the punishment he might incur, for dissecting human bodies was forbidden by ecclesiastical and secular authorities. Philip II abrogated that prohibition in the Low Countries in 1555 and allowed the use of corpses of executed convicts, very likely at the instance of Vesalius, who was his court physician. Thanks to the knowledge thus acquired by personal observation he became the first author of a comprehensive and systematic view of human anatomy, a work of revolutionary scope which he accomplished at the youthful age of twenty-eight. It brought him fame and preferment. He was appointed court physician to Charles V and remained in favor with the emperor's son, King Philip II. But neither fame nor favor could give him immunity from the wrath of the Inquisition. Thanks to the influence of his royal patron he escaped punishment by promising to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. On the voyage back from Jerusalem his ship was wrecked on the island of Zante where, broken in health and fortune, he found an untimely grave.

Under the Dutch Republic the dissecting of human bodies was no longer a punishable crime. On the contrary, the public took an interest in the work of the academic anatomists, as is attested by the many pictures of dissecting-room scenes by artists of the Dutch school. When the professor had obtained a corpse all university classes were suspended and laymen were admitted for a small entrance fee. The public found a morbid pleasure in attending these spectacles and flocked to the dissecting room to see the show.

The triumph of anti-Roman heresy had bred heresy also in the schools; or rather, the tendency toward doubt and skepticism that manifested itself in the prevalent refusal to accept traditional lore as gospel truth was identical with the spirit of revolt that had brought on the Reformation. The scientist asked, "Why should I not question what no one ever questioned?" Huygens, reluctant to accept any theological dogma as a revelation of divine truth, declared that probability was the nearest that man could come to truth; and the skeptic in him would not conform to any religious creed beyond the negative confession that he did not exclude the Deity from the probable that he knew to be attainable. His predecessor Simon Stevin, one of the most original and inventive minds of his age, chose for his life's motto an expression of his disbelief in miracles. He searched for a reign of law in the bewildering diversity of nature and rejected the belief in miracles as a denial of the cosmic order.

But the Calvinist church, though itself an offspring of that spirit of rebellion, would not suffer such extremes of doubt and negation. University professors were required to subscribe to the confession of the Church and might not teach anything that was opposed to Calvinist doctrine, a demand that was strictly enforced, of course, in the faculty of theology. Uncompromising explorers were thereby excluded from the university classrooms,

and the discoveries that had revolutionary effects were consequently made by scholars who had no professorial standing. Stevin may have lectured for a time at Leyden, but this academic connection was only a brief and minor incident in his varied career. Huygens was a man of patrician birth to whom a professorship that set dogmatic limitations to his teaching would have seemed a prison; Swammerdam was equally proud of his intellectual independence; and Van Leeuwenhoek was a humble burgher, usher to the burgomasters of Delft and untrained in the knowledge of Greek and Latin, which was then considered an essential mark of learning. He was from the academic point of view an amateur. But he and his fellow amateurs contributed more to the advancement of knowledge than the scholars who were clothed in professorial cap and gown.

Half a century after the death of Stevin (1620) the Reverend Balthazar Bekker, unique among his kind for his refusal to accept church-approved beliefs without examination, was unfrocked by the synod of North Holland for publishing in print a well-conducted argument against the belief in devils, magic, and witchcraft. The ministers saw too clearly that readers who were impressed by Bekker's reasoning would be ready to call the very authority of the Scriptures in question. They protected the survival of superstitions of the pagan past in order to save the future from losing faith in the revealed word of God.

The danger was the greater because all through the seventeenth century doubting Thomases had been undermining the power of the Calvinist church in so-called *Collegia*, conventicles where anyone might address the meeting. The first Collegiants were Remonstrants who had been ousted from the established Church. They were opposed to the authority the Calvinist ministers arrogated to themselves to discipline and dictate to the members of their congregations. They wanted recognition of

the complete equality of all parish members and of their right to prophesy and bear witness to the truth. It was an attitude that appealed to many who were repelled by the lack of charity shown toward the Remonstrants who, even if they had erred, did not deserve to be victimized and persecuted. Members of the most diverse sects began to swell the ranks of the Collegiants: Calvinists, Baptists, Lutherans, Catholics, Jews, all of them pious souls who were dissatisfied with their traditional beliefs. They held with Descartes that doubt was the first footstep on the road to knowledge, and they hoped for answers to their doubts from the discussions among the Collegiants. Was there a God? How must we represent Him? Are there actually devils? Did the Bible come from God? Has it not been falsified and corrupted? Do we understand its real meaning? What about original sin? Why should the Christian religion be the only true one?

The Collegiants did not form a church, they had no creed and no preachers. They were an invisible community bound together by charity and piety. All over the country they counted their adherents, who met once a week in the place of their residence and assembled once a year in a large house at Rijnsburg, a small village near Leyden, for the celebration of the Holy Supper as a symbol of their unity, a ceremony that did not have the significance of an entrance into a special sect of Christians.

In this liberal community free from arbitrary dogmas and petrified tenets Spinoza felt at home. Here he could freely expound his philosophy without being decried as an atheist. His faith was a bold rejection of traditional concepts of grace, original sin, remorse, and a personal god who governs nature. He started from the oneness of the world substance, which was *causa sui*, its own cause, and which he called *Deus sive Natura*, God or Nature. He assigned an infinite number of attributes to this substance, of which two were known to man: expansion



and thought, or matter and mind; and man aspiring toward perfection could experience their oneness as spiritual love of God.

The very name of Spinoza was anathema to the Dutch Reformed ministers. The Church proclaimed in its confession of faith that "the office of the magistracy is to prevent and to eradicate all idolatry and false religion and to destroy the kingdom of the Anti-Christ." The preachers, as faithful watchmen on the tower, were constantly on the lookout for insidious teachings that the Anti-Christ was spreading among the faithful to adulterate their orthodoxy; and they were ever ready to address a word of warning to the magistracy against seducers they found lurking among their flocks. But the secular authorities were seldom inclined to bestir themselves in defense of the true faith. They let people believe what they wanted and their tolerance was in keeping with the popular mood. Hollanders are by nature nonconformists; to differ from one's neighbors is a national sport. "In Amsterdam," wrote Sir William Temple, "almost all sects that are known among Christians have their public meeting places; and some whose names are almost worn out in all other parts, as the Brownists, Familists, and others."

The Familists, the English name for the followers of Hendrik Niklaes, were a sect that sprang up at Amsterdam in the forties of the sixteenth century. Niklaes was thirty-eight years old when, in 1540, he became conscious of being called by God. His mission was to build a mystical church invisible to the world but visible to God and His angels. His disciples lived and served in a spiritual Family of Love. They were employed in various ranks and degrees. All were united in a hierarchy of priests of the Lord. One rose by degrees to the top of the hierarchical ladder by endurance and complete obedience. On the highest rung one received divine revelations. Hendrik Niklaes did not try to bring his followers together under one material

roof. His House of Love was a mystical abode. The disciples, before their admission, had to confess their past sins and to promise that they would enlist in the service of love. They paid their tithes to the tithemen. The priests of the highest ranks were not allowed to have any private property but lived on the proceeds from the tithes. Relief of the poor was well organized among them. They also had their own jurisdiction, to which the members willingly submitted. They were a self-effacing sect of earnest and pious Christians, who devoted their lives to the works of charity and shunned the dogmatic controversies of their day. Niklaes had a great following in England, where his chief apostle was Christopher Vitel, a native of Delft. King James I, mistaking them for Anabaptists, denounced the Familists as an infamous sect. The Family of Love lingered on in England until the early eighteenth century, and it is clear from Sir William Temple's words that they were still active at Amsterdam in his time, though there is no official mention of them after 1614.

It is no mere accident that Locke's *Epistola de Tolerantia* was addressed to a Dutch theologian, Philip van Limborch, and was published in the Dutch town of Gouda. For Holland was the asylum of eminent men who were elsewhere denied liberty of thought. Locke's patron, the Earl of Shaftesbury, had been committed to the Tower, tried, and acquitted, but as he remained under suspicion he had left the country and escaped to Holland, where he died at Amsterdam early in 1683. Locke sought the scene of his protector's exile in the following autumn and stayed in Holland for more than five years. At Amsterdam he went by the name of Dr. Van der Linden as he was afraid of being arrested at the instance of the English government. But that was a needless precaution; the burgomasters of Amsterdam would never have acted as bailiffs for the King of England. Through Van Limborch, a learned Arminian, who was pro-

fessor at the Remonstrant Seminary in Amsterdam, he became acquainted with Jean le Clerc, another expatriate who had found greater freedom in the Dutch Republic than in his native city of Geneva. He edited at Amsterdam the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*, which was then the leading literary periodical of continental Europe. The articles that Locke wrote for it were the first of his hand to appear in print. From Amsterdam Locke moved to Rotterdam, where he lived for a time in the house of Benjamin Furley, a wealthy English merchant, who was a lover of books and a liberal host to English refugees. Furley was a Quaker and acted as William Penn's agent on the Continent.

The Quakers, in spite of the ridicule to which they were subjected, had a numerous following in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. It was, in fact, a Dutch Quaker, Willem Sewel, who wrote the first authoritative history of the Friends in English. His book was given honorable mention in the *Essays of Elia*. "Reader," wrote Lamb, "if you are not acquainted with it, I would recommend to you, above all church narratives, to read Sewel's History of the Quakers . . . It is far more edifying and affecting than anything you will read of Wesley and his colleagues. Here is nothing to stagger you, nothing to make you mistrust, no suspicion of alloy, no drop or dreg of the worldly or ambitious spirit." And elsewhere he summed up his high opinion of the book in the words, "It is worth all ecclesiastical history put together."

Willem Sewel who drew such praise from so discriminating a critic was a man of more than common talent. He apologized for the style of his English masterpiece. "I do not pretend to elegance in the English tongue; for being a foreigner and never having been in England but about the space of ten months and that nearly fifty years ago, it ought not to be expected that I should write English so well as Dutch, my native language."

Perhaps Lamb was willing to overlook the flaws in expression for the narrative's excellence; but such indulgence would redound to additional honor for the historian. If a century after its appearance the book seemed worth reading to Lamb in spite of its style, the substance must be solid indeed. But Sewel was overmodest, as befits a good Quaker. He was a great linguist, as the list of his published works testifies, which includes translations from the Latin, French, German, English, and Italian. William Penn knew him intimately and tried to persuade him to emigrate to England and take charge of a school for Friends' children in Bristol. It was not on account of insufficient mastery of the English language that Sewel declined the invitation. Love of his native land and the belief that his services were needed among the Friends in Holland persuaded him to stay in Amsterdam. "God has put me in this country," he wrote to Penn, "a witness for His name and Truth. And if I be not to be reckoned among the first, I am persuaded that the service I am accomplishing for Him in my station is not altogether in vain."

Here again his modesty led him to understating the facts. He was undoubtedly the most active among the Dutch Quakers, keeping up a correspondence with the Friends in Great Britain, acting as interpreter for the English visitors to the Amsterdam meetings, defending the Quakers with his ready pen against the aspersions of their enemies, and giving the lie to their slanderers by an exemplary life, which commanded respect for the Friends from all unprejudiced citizens.

Sewel owed his initiation into the Quaker community to his mother, who was the first Dutch woman preacher among Friends. Her son wrote of her in his *History*, "Those of her own nation often resorted to her for instruction, she being so well exercised in the way of the Lord that she was able to speak a

word in season to various conditions. Many times she visited the meetings at Alkmaar, Haarlem, and Rotterdam, and was often invited by her Friends to come and edify them with her gifts." William Caton, who in the early sixties of the seventeenth century was in charge of the mission work in Holland, induced her in 1663 to visit England, where she addressed in Dutch a general meeting of Friends at Kingston. When she died the year after, Caton wrote to a Friend in England, "Since that dear Judith was removed, the weight of the service lyes chiefly upon mee."

A few years later her son, then fifteen years old, also crossed over to England. He called on Stephen Crisp in prison at Ipswich and attended the funeral of Josiah Coale, whose body was escorted to the grave by more than a thousand Friends. At that early date he was already collecting data about the Quakers, which half a century later he was to turn to good account. It is a pity that he was not equally interested in the story of Quakerism in his own country. His eight hundred and sixty-eight folio pages contain but little information about the events in which his mother and he himself had been prominently active. The Quakers attracted a great deal of attention in Holland, and their meetings were apparently regarded as show places for the curious and idle rich. The stories that were circulated concerning Quaker practices aroused the curiosity not only of the vulgar who were out for sensation, but also of the learned and of students of religion. But as Hollanders they were not interested in what was happening in their own time and country, but in the origins from which the new sect took its rise. Chief among these scholars was the Reverend Gerard Croese, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. In 1690 he entered into correspondence with Sewel and obtained from him a mass of data, out of which he composed his *Historia Quakeriana*, which appeared

at Amsterdam in 1695. Sewel was not pleased with this first history of the movement, nor were his Quaker friends in England, Germany, and Holland. Croese's lack of sympathy with the object of his study had betrayed him into grossly misrepresenting the Quakers. From that time on, Sewel regarded it as his duty to supersede this erroneous history with a fairer and more scholarly account of the Society of Friends. It was not until 1717 that the original Dutch version came from the press. Three years more were granted him for the completion of his English translation, which he was not destined to see in print. He died in 1720, and in 1722 the *History* that was to win praise from Charles Lamb was published in London, at the Bible, in George-Yard, Lombard Street.

The German mystic, Jacob Boehme, also had his followers in Holland. All his writings were translated into Dutch and circulated among pious readers who, unresponsive in their hearts to the teaching of the Calvinist doctrine, yearned for a faith that was in harmony with their own dim concepts of God and the world and that would illumine them with the light of an inspired seer's vision. Boehme's poetic mysticism appealed to their longings.

He found an artistic interpreter of his writings in Jan Luyken, the poet. In Luyken's first book of verse, a slender volume of songs and lyrics, which he published in his twenty-second year, there is no trace yet of his later pietism; but everything that he wrote afterwards is expressive of his nostalgia for the life in God. His father, who was a schoolmaster in Amsterdam, was a radical thinker and active among the Collegiants of that city. But the son did not join their community. He shunned the company of his fellow men and sought in solitude the peace that can be found only in a close communion with God. He communicated his mystical experiences in several volumes of devotional

verse which he illustrated with his own engravings. Heaven and hell were to him not local realities but states of mind created by man himself. The punishment of sin was not a torment in the beyond but the disharmony that tortures the soul in this life; the reward of virtue internal joy and peace. He asserted the Bible was not the source from which all truth is drawn but merely an illustration of truth. Christ was to him identical with light. The Father's power, he taught, was everything in and above all heavens, and that same power brings forth the light. Divine omnipotence bears the name of the Father, and the light that is born from that omnipotence bears the name of the Son. Luyken was much sought after as an etcher and illustrator, and Amsterdam was the place where a man of his talent could get commissions. But he left the metropolis for a quiet fishing village on the Zuider Zee, where he found happiness in a hermit life. His gift as an etcher informed his poetry, in which mystic longings for the uncreated beauty of God are translated into images from the beauty of the visible world.

Luyken's retreat from the world was not the way to reform it. He could not make it a better one except by showing his fellow men the way to God that he had chosen, but few were inclined to follow him. There were others who shared his longing for a better world but hoped to realize it by action rather than by meditation and prayer. One of these was Pieter Corneliszoon Plockhoy, who dreamed and actively planned for a communist society in which all schisms that divided mankind would be harmoniously merged. He watched with deep concern the shattering of Christian Europe into so many sects which, in spite of all their pious talk about God and His infinite goodness, could not create among themselves even a feeble reflection of that goodness upon earth. The wretched lot of the poor cried to heaven, but the sects, instead of joining in a noble effort to

eliminate poverty, exerted themselves in proving their own pet creed the sole way to salvation in the life beyond. Plockhoy wanted to discover the way to salvation of the poor in this material world. He went to England in the hope that Cromwell, the strong man of the hour, would take the lead in razing all sectarian barriers and uniting all Christians into an undogmatic brotherhood. Cromwell's death did not make him lose hope. In 1659 he published in English his blueprint for a better social order, which he entitled, *A Way propounded to make the poor in these and other nations happy by bringing together a fit, suitable and well-qualified people unto one Household government or little Commonwealth.*

Plockhoy was not an unpractical idealist. He proposed the formation of a miniature community that might serve as a model for the world at large; if it proved successful on a small scale, each national community would do well to adopt it, and if adopted it would prove a blessing to mankind. Its aim was to make the poor happy. In Plockhoy's society there must not be any suppression and exploitation of others. The communal life of its members must be based on justice, charity, and brotherly love. None shall live on the labor of others. There was to be complete equality, and a general desire to be of service to each other. The labor that has to be performed must be equalized and adapted to each worker's strength. Priests and clergymen, he wrote, pretend to care for the souls of their flocks, as if they could love the soul which they cannot see, while they show no compassion for the body that they do see. In Plockhoy's community compassion will be shown to both body and soul, so that those who barely have bread will enjoy physical and spiritual contentment.

The principle of equality presupposes association. It has no meaning for a hermit like Luyken. But those who live together



must be so organized that the best results are obtained with the greatest economy of effort. A hundred families living separately waste a lot of labor, for a hundred women are required to run all those households, a hundred fires lighted on which to cook a hundred meals. But if those families are brought together under one roof, four or five large fires will suffice for the preparation of a hundred meals by no more than twenty-five of the one hundred women, the other seventy-five being available for the performance of tasks for which they show skill or inclination. Such collaboration is not merely a labor-saving device, it is also productive of more and better labor. In the world as now organized everyone employs his skill and talent for his own profit and therefore conceals these from his fellow men; in Plockhoy's community everyone shares with his associates to the advancement and prosperity of the whole.

In order to establish such a communist society in miniature it is necessary, Plockhoy reasoned, that a few wealthy men supply the capital that is needed for the purchase of the land. The next step is the assembling of persons who are willing to enter into this communal household. They must be selected with care from four different categories: agriculturists, tradesmen and craftsmen, sailors and fishermen, and lastly artists and scholars.

None who joins loses his property rights. Gifts to the communal treasury will of course be welcome, but no one is forced to make a material sacrifice for his admission. Each shall be free to choose the kind of work that suits him, and though all must work, except on the Sabbath, none shall be compelled to labor more than six hours a day. The plan provides also for wage earners who are not members of the community; these are required to work twelve hours a day, until the time when they are admitted to membership.

The profits that the labor of the members yields shall be evenly divided among them. It is not likely that there will be no yield, as their manner of living is simple and inexpensive, and all necessities of life which the community does not produce itself are bought wholesale at the lowest price. The group grows its own fruit and vegetables, catches its own fish, makes its own beverages, and breeds its own livestock, so that the cost of all these is greatly reduced.

Two houses are needed for each community: one in town for the tradesmen and merchants, and for all those whose work is best suited to an urban society; the other on the land near a river for the agriculturists, the sailors and fishermen, the craftsmen, and the scholars. The town house will be a kind of department store or bazaar where textiles, ready-made clothes, shoes and various other commodities manufactured by the members will be for sale to the general public. Everyone pays a modest rent for the space that he occupies, but in addition to the private apartments each house will contain a common dining room, a nursery, a sickroom, a dispensary, a library, and accommodation for visitors who shall pay for it either in labor or with ready money.

There shall also be a school in which the children, in addition to the knowledge that is commonly imparted to the young, shall be trained three hours a day in some useful handicraft; but they shall not be taught any special religion. They must be accustomed to believing no one in spiritual things except the few God-inspired souls who, like the prophets and apostles, can perform miracles; for our faith must be based not on the fallible words of men but on the mighty works of God. Holy Writ, however, which all Christians accept and believe, shall on Sundays and holy days be read to the members, who shall assemble for that purpose in a large auditorium built amphitheatre-wise. In such

an organization, Plockhoy concluded, there would be no discontent, no envy, no strife, for all would be working for each others' benefit, none being exploited in the service of selfish employers. There will be no haunting fear of poverty and destitution, for those who through sickness and old age become disabled will be supported by the community. No one will be poor and no one excessively rich. A well-balanced society is the surest foundation for the happiness and peace of all.

Plockhoy had hoped to establish such communities in London, Bristol, and Ireland; but his pamphlet does not seem to have made any impression on the English public. The English Quaker John Bellers published in 1696 "Proposals for raising a Colledge of Industry of all useful Trades and Husbandry, with profit for the Rich, a plentiful living for the Poor, and a good Education for Youth," a book that brought him fame when in the early nineteenth century Robert Owen admitted that it contained in substance the reform ideas that he realized in his model townships. Karl Marx also read it and called Bellers "a phenomenon in political economy." But Owen, who recognized a forerunner in Bellers, and Bellers himself, were anticipated by Plockhoy, whose concept of a cooperative society may justly be styled a phenomenal achievement since it antedated that of Bellers by nearly forty years.

Plockhoy's proposals met with a better reception in his native country. The Amsterdam Chamber of the West India Company was anxious to stimulate emigration to New Netherland and welcomed Plockhoy's offer to settle with a community of twenty-five men and their wives and children on the banks of the South River, the name among the Dutch of the Delaware. He sailed for the new home in America in 1662 with a group of twenty-five colonists who were all of the Baptist persuasion. It was an ill-fated experiment, for his Swandale colony soon became in-

volved in the rivalry between the naval powers. In 1664 King Charles presented New Netherland to his brother, James, Duke of York, and when Sir Robert Carr, on the duke's behalf, took possession of the Delaware, he sent an armed expedition to Swandale. The soldiers plundered and demolished the settlement and scattered the colonists. They were never seen nor heard of again.

Only two of them turned up thirty years later. A blind old man and his wife stumbled into Germantown, a young settlement of Baptists from Holland and the Rhineland, and begged for shelter. They gave him a small plot of land where they built him a little house and laid out a garden. It was there that Pieter Corneliszoon Plockhoy, a noble humanitarian, died in utter oblivion.

A more successful enterprise was the church house of the Labadists at Waltha Castle near Wieuwerd in Friesland. The Labadists were followers of Jean de Labadie, a French nobleman who had come to the Dutch Republic in hope of finding freedom to live according to his mystical belief. He founded at Amsterdam a church house, a combination of church and home where he and his followers lived in monastic seclusion. But monasticism was not popular with the Amsterdam populace. The inmates of the church house were the butt of scandalous reports and rumors and were molested in the street when they ventured abroad. So they moved away and started a wandering life, until they found a welcome and a permanent home at Waltha Castle thanks to the generosity of its owners, three sisters of noble birth who had joined De Labadie's flock.

They arrived there in 1675. De Labadie had died the year before, but Pierre Yvon, who had succeeded him as leader of the group, kept his flock together. It numbered one hundred and

sixty-two members, among them Anna Maria van Schuurman, a learned bluestocking of European fame whose book *Eucleria* gives the best exposition of the master's tenets. The Church, according to De Labadie, is a communion of holy people who have been born again from sin, and baptism is the sign and seal of this regeneration. It was the holy universal covenant embracing all the elect forever and aye. Its members are wherever God has His children, among all nations and denominations.

At Waltha Castle there was community of goods; the members lived together under one roof, and dined in one room, the men and the women at separate tables. They had shepherds to whom they gave unquestioning obedience. The shepherds assigned to each his task. Each separate family had its own room, but all rooms had to be open at all times to the shepherds.

It was a wealthy community, for there were disciples who had brought in large capital, and the proceeds from the labor of the members were considerable, for all had to work for their daily bread. They tilled the land, bred livestock, or worked in the bakery, the smithy, the brewhouse, the mill, the printing shop. There were masons among them, and carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, weavers, bookbinders. No articles of luxury might be produced. Anna Maria van Schuurman was skillful in painting, engraving, and embroidery, but when she became a disciple of De Labadie she had to forswear such vanities. The castle was a busy beehive in which all were at work in humble self-denial. Novices were given the lowest kinds of labor, and not until they had performed their menial tasks with love and devotion to the common good were they promoted to higher-grade work. Through self-mortification all entrants were inducted into the brotherhood. Everyone, both novices and initiates, had to confess in the public meeting all their evil thoughts

in obedience to the commandment of James in his Epistle, "Confess your sins one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed."

The Labadists did not observe the Sabbath because, they said, their life was a continual Sabbath. They lived indeed in sabbatical peace and harmony and created in a war-distracted world a miniature model of the human society of their dreams. William Penn, with his fellow Quakers George Fox, Robert Barclay, and George Keith, while on an evangelistic tour on the Continent, came to visit them in 1677, and it is not unlikely that on that occasion plans were discussed for the establishment of a Labadist church house in the New World, for if humanity was to enjoy the benefits of the Labadist way of life, the Waltha community had to send out apostles to spread the good tidings abroad. Two of the brethren, Peter Sluiter and Jasper Dankaerts, were sent to New York to investigate and select a suitable place of settlement. They planted a Labadist colony on Bohemia Manor, in Pennsylvania; but the venture ended in failure. The Waltha community did not long survive the collapse of its American offshoot. Pierre Yvon died in 1707, and, deprived of his leadership, the brotherhood languished and was finally dissolved in the third decade of the eighteenth century. Why did they fail? Their contemporary, Bernard de Mandeville, the author of *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, had an answer to that question. In the *Fable* he showed a society possessed of all the virtues and blest with content and honesty, and yet falling into apathy and becoming utterly paralyzed, for the absence of self-love, he maintained, is the death of progress.

Mandeville was more fortunate than Plockhoy. His book was not ignored; on the contrary, it was widely read and often reprinted, and elicited much controversy and criticism, as well as

admiration and excessive praise. "I read Mandeville forty, or, I believe, fifty years ago. . . . He opened my views into real life very much," said Dr. Johnson of him. Macaulay went so far as to say, "If Shakespeare had written a book on the motives of human actions it is . . . extremely improbable that it would have contained half so much able reasoning on the subject as is to be found in *The Fable of the Bees*." And Robert Browning recognized in Mandeville "the sage in whom truth triumphs through the harmonious combination of good with evil." His contemporaries were less appreciative of his talents. He offended Joseph Addison by referring to him as "a parson in a tye-wig" and offended the public in general by the subtitle of his *Fable* and by the outspokenness with which he uttered unpleasant truths. Benjamin Franklin met him once at an alehouse in Cheapside, where Mandeville was the soul of the club, and found him "a most facetious, entertaining companion." But the English of Queen Anne's day were too much shocked by what they considered to be the immoral moral of his *Fable* to appreciate the man's wit. They found some comfort, however, in the thought that the fellow was only a foreigner. He was born in Dordrecht, went to school in Rotterdam, studied medicine at Leyden, and took his doctor's degree there in 1691, after which, for some unknown reason, he left his native country and settled in England. To the orthodox his book seemed less dangerous than Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks of man, manners, opinions, times*, which Mandeville's *Fable* satirized. If human nature was actually such as Shaftesbury painted it: fundamentally good and beautiful, then religion was a superfluous luxury. Mandeville, on the other hand, represented man as a fallen creature in need of a saviour.

Foreign visitors expressed surprise at the unaccountable spectacle of a many-headed state where every man behaved as if he were his own master and where, nevertheless, civic order pre-

vailed such as no foreign despot could enforce; where, stranger still, all sects were tolerated and yet religious strife was less bitter than elsewhere. "It is hardly to be imagined," wrote Sir William Temple, "how all the violence and sharpness which accompanies the differences of religion in other countries seems to be appeased or softened by the general freedom which all men enjoy, either by allowance or by connivance; nor how faction and ambition are thereby disabled to colour their interested and seditious designs with the pretences of religion, which has cost the Christian world so much blood for these last hundred and fifty years." Where everyone is free to speak his mind the urge to use blows for arguments is a foolish passion. Liberty trained the Dutch in the art of urbane debate; their government, as defined by De Witt, was a government of persuasion. Said Sir William, "They argue without interest or anger; they differ without enmity or scorn; and they agree without confederacy.\* Men live together, like citizens of the world, associated by the common ties of humanity and by the bonds of peace under the impartial protection of indifferent laws, with equal encouragement of all art and industry, and equal freedom of speculation and inquiry."

\* *i.e. collusion.*



## CHAPTER IX

### BURGHER ART

THE EXPLORATIVE urge that drove Dutch navigators to the ends of the earth and scientists to question the authority of medieval learning and pietists to plan for a Christian utopia could not fail to affect also the men of letters. Hollanders had never figured prominently in the literature of the Middle Ages; Flemings and Brabanters were the leading poets and prose writers of the pre-Reformation era. But when the southern Netherlands were brought back under the authority of Spain, and Dutch liberty maintained itself only in the Republic north of the great rivers, the Dutch muse, needing freedom for her song, fled Antwerp and Brussels and withdrew to Amsterdam. Here was a young generation buoyed up by victory, aglow with patriotic pride, and eager to assert itself both in deeds of valor and words of beauty. The language that their ancestors had taken for granted became to them a wonderland to be explored. They found there the traces of many foreign intruders owing to the neglect and indifference of previous generations who had not guarded their linguistic patrimony against invasion. "Not even then when we believe we speak Hollandish are we sufficiently Hollanders," said Hugo Grotius in one of his earliest works, "for we have infected our genuine and pure diction with an exotic medley of words." If it were cleansed of these foreign impurities, the Dutch language, he thought, would prove to be an eloquent speech because of the admirable short-

ness of its native words. One could hear that in the speech of North Holland, where the language had retained greater purity than in other regions. The monosyllabic form of its radicals, which made Hollandish an efficient instrument, gave it this added advantage that it facilitated the formation of compound words. "Even children at their games," he exclaimed, "could form them without being aware that they created anything new!"

The young poets in Amsterdam and The Hague created new words in full consciousness. They went in search of old ones that lived on in the uncouth speech of common folk; Vondel strolled along the quays and docks of the harbor and made himself familiar with nautical terms of seafaring men; Bredero looked for word nuggets of gold no matter where he found them, were it even on a dunghill; Hooft reproduced the racy speech of Amsterdam in *Warenar*, an adaptation of Plautus' *Aulularia* to the life and manners of his native city. They weeded out the French bastard terms which in the works of the sixteenth-century rhetoricians had shot up into an evil growth and coined new compounds to replace them. Hooft was the most rabid purist among them, but his ingenuity in the making of new words overreached itself and degenerated into an irritating mannerism. Yet for all that he was the leading renovator of the language and the poet who drew the most melodious music from his instrument.

The poets also went exploring in foreign literatures that had remained unknown to their medieval precursors. These had drawn inspiration from French and Latin models, but Hooft went to Italy and wrote sonnets and pastoral drama in the manner of Petrarch and Guarini, Bredero dramatized an episode from a Spanish romance of roguery, Vondel made a prose translation of Tasso's great epic and wrote Shakespearian sonnets,

and Constantijn Huygens translated nineteen of Donne's poems and tried to imitate his style in his own verse.

Since the art of writing was an entirely new venture in Holland, even the most talented among these poets invaded this unexplored region with caution and awe. Hollanders had been at home on the sea for ages, and they sailed unafraid to uncharted waters with a confidence born from long familiarity with the elements. But consciousness of lack of training tempered the enthusiasm of these young writers. They were glad to be guided by foreign models or prudently stuck to the beaten paths of medieval precursors in the south. Jacob Cats wrote long didactic poems that differ only in form, not in substance, from similar long-winded productions of Maerlant, Boendale, and others of an earlier age. These wrote in rhyming octosyllabic couplets, Cats in the rhyming alexandrine that was the favorite meter of the seventeenth century. Vondel continued the vogue of the liturgical mystery play, and only departed from former models by copying Seneca in constructing his biblical tragedies. They were late-medieval mystery plays sublimated into classical dramas of high excellence by the beauty of his verse. He was the greatest among his fellow poets; yet all his life he remained a humble follower of the classics of antiquity: Virgil first of all, and Seneca, and Horace, and in later life the Greek playwrights. In the heyday of his genius he was never too proud to sit down at the feet of the great masters whom he knew to be greater than himself.

Hooft, too, felt the need of classical guidance. When he planned to write the history of the Dutch war of independence, he read and reread and finally translated the whole of Tacitus in order to train himself in writing as sinewy a style in Dutch. An armored style he called it. But it is armor of so obviously foreign manufacture that it mars the impression of thorough Dutch-

ness that the author hoped to attain by his purism. It is a prose of native words and Latin syntax, yet a prose of great beauty and strength unequaled by any other writer of his time. As a playwright he attempted a similar fusion: he staged episodes from Netherlandish history in dramas constructed in imitation of Seneca's tragedies, the substance indigenous, the form borrowed from classical antiquity.

Such was the literary taste of the time. When Vondel addressed the burgomasters of Amsterdam, he called them consuls, and the city council became in his classical style an august senate. He pictured the gods of Olympus as guests and participants at wedding feasts of prominent Amsterdam burghers and peopled their country places with wood nymphs and arcadian shepherds. The wealthy merchant rulers were flattered with such classical disguises, and when they planned the building of a new city hall, they chose for its architect a man who shared the poet's Roman taste. Jacob van Campen designed an imposing pile of Bentheim rock, severe and forbidding by the predominance of the straight line, the whole structure a cube of gigantic dimensions, but the simplicity of outline was relieved by a wealth of allegorical sculpture for which ancient mythology had supplied the motifs. Van Campen's city hall might be described as a poem by Vondel translated into stone.

It was erected, and still stands, on the Dam, the square which is the hub of the old city. But this cube of gray granite, imposing though it be, is out of harmony with the surrounding native architecture. The charm and distinctive feature of that architecture is the red brick baked of the clay deposits along the Dutch rivers. Dutch houses are of the earth earthy, as if they had grown, like the willows and the elms that line the canals, from the very soil on which they stand. They taper into crow-step gables which, since they differ in height, break the skyline

into a capricious pattern that seems to mock the rectilinear austerity of the city-hall cube.

In the same way Vondel's majestic style is apt to overawe rather than to delight Dutch readers. There are many editions of his collected works, but they seldom pass from the bookshelf into the owner's hands. His poetry is akin to the art of Rubens, exuberant and massive; the Hollander's nature is introvert and delights in the quiet pleasures of home life and the unromantic beauty of lowland scenery.

Hence Vondel never attained the popularity of Jacob Cats, who cannot bear a candle to Vondel. Cats' theme was the workaday world and man's place in society. Since the home is the smallest unit of organized society, the family was to him the cornerstone of the Republic and marriage the bond that held the nation together. Courtship, matrimony, motherhood, the seven ages of man, education, discipline, the duties of children toward their parents, the relationship between husband and wife, the comforts and troubles of old age, death and burial were discussed by him in simply phrased verse. His word pictures of Dutch home life have much in common with those that Pieter de Hooch and Johannes Vermeer of Delft painted on canvas; but whereas the painters told a story only as a pretext for charming the eye with the wonder of the sunlight, Cats told his stories to teach and to edify the readers' minds. He did edify his contemporaries; the modern reader has neither the time nor the patience to listen to his garrulous didacticism. The beauty that the painters caught on their canvases has not grown stale with the passage of time, but Cats and his fellow poets, even the greatest of them, wrote only for their own age.

One poet should be excepted from this statement: the most thoroughly Dutch of them all, Gerbrand Adriaanszoon Bredero. He died young, at an age at which Vondel was writing po-

etry far inferior to his. Bredero's farces and comedies, in spite of defective construction, are still enjoyable reading because of the racy, colorful dialogue which brings the people of his day alive again. He was fortunately not spoiled by the study of the classics, which were the revered models of Vondel and Hooft. He knew no other book, he boasted, than the book of usage, and he apologized with mock humility for any errors he might have committed "through ignorance of outlandish tongues. For I have as a painter been guided by the painter's maxim that the best artists are those who come nearest to life."

The art of the theatre, which had been popular in the south in the heyday of the Chambers of Rhetoric, was the least respected of the arts in the Dutch Republic. The Calvinist ministers frowned on the frivolities of the stage. Only at Amsterdam, under the powerful protection of the burgomasters, did a Dutch theatre flourish, and it was here that Vondel's mystery plays and Bredero's comedies could come to life behind the footlights. Romantic drama was also played there, but the purveyors of this kind of entertainment were scribblers of little or no talent; they drew crowds to the show place not by their art but by the realistic production of horrors. If the Prince of Orange had favored the Dutch stage, court patronage might have offset the injurious effect of Calvinist scorn and contempt. But the court spoke French and subsidized a French company; its preference for outlandish drama was no less damaging to the prestige of Dutch actors than was the antagonism of the Church ministers. Social ostracism remained the players' lot until the end of the Republic. In the late eighteenth century they were still disqualified as witnesses in court on the ground that they belonged to a disreputable calling.

Dutch music, too, went into a decline in the Calvinist Republic. In the late Middle Ages the southern Netherlands had

been a well of music undefiled. Dutch composers welded the mass into a musical unit by weaving a *cantus firmus*, a melody, through all its five parts, and that melody was often derived from a secular ballad. Thus polyphonous song intruded via the secular folk song into church music.

But the chief glory of the Flemish school is the madrigal. Since printing music came into vogue about the year 1500, Dutch songbooks were distributed far and wide, and Flemish and Italian masters vied with each other in pouring spirit and meaning into words. Poets began to be interpreted in music, and the Flemish composers Willaert and his pupil Cipriano da Rore, both natives of Antwerp, merged Italian popular music and Flemish counterpoint into the madrigal, the flower of secular music of the Renaissance period. Alfred Einstein, the historian of the Italian madrigal, compares Cipriano to Michelangelo in significance, character, and influence. He is indeed the central figure in the story of the madrigal's evolution, but almost as great are three gifted maestros of late Renaissance music, Orlando di Lasso, Philippe de Monte, and Jacob Wert. And these again, all three incomparable masters of the madrigal, were natives of the southern Netherlands. Lodovico Guicciardini said in his famous *Description of All the Low Countries*, "Here are the true masters of music, who have restored and perfected that art. For it is so native to them that men and women sing naturally to measure, with great charm and melody. And having joined art to nature, they make such demonstration and harmony with voices and all sorts of instruments as everyone can see and hear and may be found in all the courts of Christian princes." Speaking a universal language, they found indeed employment as organists and choirmasters wherever music was cultivated. Cipriano was choirmaster at the court of Parma at the time of his death in 1565; Orlando di Lasso traveled all over Europe

and ended his life as chief *kapellmeister* at the court of the Duke of Bavaria; De Monte became in 1568 *kapellmeister* to the Emperor Maximilian; and Wert was *maestro di capella* at the court of Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga. While the English madrigal is justly called one of the glories of the musical history of England, it can compare, says Paul Henry Lang "neither in quality nor in quantity with the parent form, which, curiously enough, owes its first great era to Flemish musicians who merged the learned counterpoint of their homeland with the sensuous and frivolously gay music and poetry of Italy."

The northern provinces did not contribute much to the fame of Dutch music. Only one great composer came from those parts: Jacob Obrecht, a native of Utrecht. He worked in the southern Netherlands, but finally found his way to Italy, the land of promise for Dutch musicians, and obtained employment at the court of the Estes at Ferrara, where he died in 1505 of the plague.

The chief patrons of music in the Netherlands in pre-Reformation days were the Church and the dukes of Burgundy. In the Calvinist Republic there was neither a court that bade it welcome nor a church that would foster it. The early Calvinists, burning with reformatory zeal, banned organ music from their religious services, and even in the Catholic south church music suffered a decline since the Council of Trent forbade all music which in its melody or text contained sensual or impure elements. The Dutch Reformed Church gradually reinstated organ music as an essential part of the services, but exclusively for the accompaniment of the psalm singing. Fortunately, the church buildings were owned by the municipalities, and the burgo-masters in many cities had the organist give evening recitals which the orthodox deplored as a desecration of God's temples. Even Huygens, the poet, who was himself a talented musician and composer, protested as a good Calvinist against these frivo-



lous evening concerts at which "for one psalm that the organist played he gave ten madrigals and lighter tunes such as one could not mention in church without giving offence." The orthodox, therefore, stayed away from these evening frivolities. They attracted chiefly the patricians who admired the manners and the music of Paris and Rome. Secular music became the exclusive recreation of the upper ten. Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, the last in the long procession of great Dutch composers, published collections of his songs with dedications in French to wealthy Amsterdam patrons. The poems that he set to music were Latin, French, or Italian lyrics. Even the four books of his psalms were printed with the text in French.

The loss of church patronage was less detrimental to the art of painting. Though it was banned from the Calvinist houses of prayer and deprived of the patronage of the ducal court, it did not become an outcast and a pariah. The burghers of the new democracy welcomed it to their homes. The people themselves became the patrons of the painting craft. Even the poorest household was not without its picture. While music became an aristocratic luxury, art turned democratic and was at home among all classes of society.

That does not explain, though, the phenomenal flowering of Dutch art in the seventeenth century. Other factors came into play to bring about that miracle, for it is indeed miraculous that in a nation of barely a million inhabitants so many paintings of high quality were produced that not a picture gallery in Europe and America need be without a canvas of the Dutch school. The skill of these painters was the fruit of the accumulated experience of successive generations. The son grew up in his father's workshop and inherited with the shop the old man's technique. Painters were handicraftsmen pure and simple, as were the potters, the weavers, the blacksmiths, the carpenters,

the wood carvers, the sculptors, the goldsmiths. Each town of the Low Countries in the late Middle Ages was a busy center of industrial activity of various kinds. Apprentices came from all parts of Europe, attracted by the fame of Dutch workmanship. Albrecht Dürer's father was one of these. He came to the Netherlands from his native Hungary to work as an apprentice in a goldsmith's workshop before he settled as a master in Nürnberg. These itinerant craftsmen helped to spread among foreigners the fame of Dutch arts and crafts. As a consequence, buyers and collectors came to the Netherlands to purchase pictures and prints. Antwerp in the early sixteenth century was one of the great art markets of Europe.

After Parma's conquests in the southern Netherlands a great many craftsmen emigrated to the free Dutch Republic north of the Maas. The majority settled in the province of Holland, and thus the industry and skill of workers from various parts of the Low Countries became concentrated in the towns of that small region. Amsterdam was the Mecca of these migrants, for there they found abundant employment, and an ever-expanding market for their output.

An age-old technical tradition alone cannot account for the excellence of that output. These painters were such consummate craftsmen because they acquired their skill at an age at which the mind is most malleable and receptive. Our modern system of compulsory school education does not give a potential artist the chance of being initiated into the mysteries of the craft while he is most teachable and eager to learn. A boy whose fingers itched to ply the brush was usually apprenticed, if he was not a painter's son, to a local master at the age of ten. By that time he knew the three R's, and that knowledge was all he needed from school. Life would complete his general education. This gave the artist in him an early start. Thousands of contracts

have been preserved between a boy's parents and the master to whom they apprenticed him. The latter received as a rule one hundred guilders a year for bed, board, and tuition. That was a fairly good income for the artist, since the guilder in those days was worth a great deal more than it is now. One hundred guilders was probably the equivalent of two thousand at the present time. Moreover, the master got something in return for his instruction besides the money that the boy's parents paid him. The young apprentice was his servant and errand boy. He had to sweep the floor of the studio, do all sorts of menial tasks for the master, grind his paints on the stone and mix them with oil. Such chores initiated him into the work of the studio.

He was taught to draw by methods that our age, so much wiser and so much less skillful, has taught us to despise: he was given drawings of the master to copy, and had to draw from casts before he was set to copy life itself. Progress was rapid, for practice was continuous. The apprentice rose with the sun and went to bed with the sun, and worked all day. That was the customary stipulation in the contracts. Human nature was probably recalcitrant and extorted from the master a softening of the standard regime. Still, we may be sure that the child got small opportunity for relaxation, except in the pranks that the apprentices managed to play in the studio when the master's eye was not upon them. Constantijn Huygens, who was a patron of Rembrandt when the artist was still a beardless boy, marveled at the industry of his protégé and Rembrandt's fellow student Lievens. "I must admit," he wrote, "that I never saw such diligence and devotion in any class of people, in young or old, in any pursuit whatsoever. Even the innocent pleasures of boyhood have no attraction for them, because they cost time . . . I have often wished that these excellent youths would moderate this tireless persistence in difficult work, though it promise them great progress in a short

time, and that they would have some regard for their bodies which, owing to their sedentary life, are not very vigorous and strong."

The work produced by the apprentice belonged to the master. It was the product of his workshop, and he could sell it for his own. There was nothing reprehensible in that. When we order a chair from a cabinetmaker, we do not inquire whether our purchase is the work of the master or of his assistants. If the master is willing to sell it, he vouches for its quality. In the same way the artist, in selling a picture by one of his pupils, vouched for its excellence. A burgher who wanted a picture went to the workshop that turned out the kind he liked; but he was not inquisitive about which hand of the many at work there had painted the canvas or panel of his choice. It came from master so and so's studio, and that was sufficient guarantee of its worth. An artist's studio, consequently, was not only a workshop, it was also an art-dealer's store, and many a painter sold pictures not only of his own shop but also of other masters.

The truth of Goethe's words, "*In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister*,"\* is exemplified in the work of these shop painters. By renouncing the fame of versatility they attained perfection within their limited range. Nearly all of them were specialists in one narrowly circumscribed genre. Although they were constantly painting the same motifs, they knew how to create diversity by an endless variation of arrangement. The genius of a Bruegel, a Rubens, and a Rembrandt could not be held within such limited bounds. But they were rare exceptions. Most members of the craft achieved mastery by self-restriction. In this way each genre was split up into subsidiary genres, each of which had its specialists. The still-life artists can be subdivided into painters of breakfast scenes, of fowl, of fish, of venison; the

\* *The master manifests himself in limitation.*

landscape artists into painters of winter scenes, of river and city views, of woodland, of mountain scenery.

Landscape painted for its own sake and not as background to a portrait or a scene of human activity was an essentially Dutch invention. The English word landscape betrays its Dutch origin; the English equivalent of the Dutch suffix *-schap* is *-ship*, as in township, not *-scape*. The word was borrowed from the Dutch painters with the genre that they introduced into England. Even the names of some of the tools of their craft were imported from the Netherlands. The Dutch artist calls the support of his panel *ezel*, that is, donkey, because it is his dumb beast of burden; the English borrowed the name without realizing its actual meaning.

These evidences of Dutch influence on the British painter's technical language are not surprising. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries England had few important painters of her own. She depended largely on craftsmen from abroad. Hans Holbein from Basel was the portraitist of English high society in the reign of Henry VIII. The well-known portrait of Shakespeare in the First Folio Edition of his works is from the hand of a Dutch artist, Maerten Droeeshout. The Inquisition had driven many Dutch masters to the safe shores of England. Marcus Gheeraerts, Paul van Somer, Daniel Mytens, Cornelis Jansen were the best known among these. It is instructive to examine the illustrations in the two volumes of *Shakespeare's England* published by the Clarendon Press in 1916. There is a portrait engraving of King James I by Simon van de Passe, an oil portrait of Prince Henry by Paul van Somer, one of Martin Frobisher by Cornelis Ketel, one of Sir Edward Coke by Cornelis Jansen, a view of Nonesuch Palace by Joris Hoefnagel, and engravings of female costumes of the Elizabethan period by the same master, exquisite engravings by Cornelis Visscher of London Bridge and of St. Paul's Cathedral as seen from across

the Thames, with the Globe Theatre and the Bear Garden in the background. If it were not for the Dutch artists then living in London, we should have but a faint conception of what an Elizabethan theatre looked like. Thanks to the vivid pen sketch that Johannes de With did of the Swan Theatre we can visualize the action and arrangement of the stage.

This prominence of Dutch art in the cultural life of England continued during the following century. Van Dyck was court painter to Charles I, Sir Peter Lely to Charles II. Sir Peter's real name was Van der Faes. His father, who was a captain in the States army, was born at The Hague in a house that, after the sign over the door, was called the Lily, and the name of the house passed on to the family that lived there. Sir Peter's rival, Godfrey Kneller, was a native of Lübeck, but he had studied in Holland under Rembrandt and Ferdinand Bol and belonged, because of his style, to the Dutch school. Arnold Houbraken, therefore, did not fail to include his biography in his *Great Theatre of the Netherland Painters*. He said of Kneller's portraits that they differed widely in value, "owing to the fact that the painters he employed at different times were not equally skillful, some being more capable in imitating his manner than others. For they consider it proper in England that the masters paint only the faces and hands and leave the costumes and other details to assistants. But in Holland such a procedure would not pass muster."

That is an interesting passage, for it proves that, at the time when Houbraken wrote, the communal labor of the craftsmen's workshop had gone out of vogue in the Netherlands. What Houbraken took to be an English custom was merely a survival of the medieval method of art production that the Dutch painters of the sixteenth century must have brought over from their native country. In the late seventeenth century the common craft

had become an individual art. It can hardly be accidental that this change coincided with the decay of the painter's art in the Netherlands.

In German lands Dutch art was equally influential. When Albrecht Dürer came to the Low Countries in 1520, he came not as a stranger wondering what he might see there. He had studied with Wohlgemuth, and Wohlgemuth's predecessor, Hans Pleydenwurff, had introduced in Nürnberg the manner of the Netherlands. Dürer must have heard from his master many a second-hand story about art and artists in the Low Countries. Besides, Jan van Scorel, of Haarlem, had visited him in Nürnberg and, according to Van Mander, had stayed for some time to learn from him. "But since Luther at that time began to disturb the peaceful world with his teaching and Dürer became involved in that controversy, Scorel said good-bye to him and went to Styer in Carinthia, where he was much in demand working for most of the nobility." He went on to Venice, joined there a company of pilgrims to Jerusalem through the persuasion of one of them, a Béguine father from Gouda in Holland. On his way back from the Holy Land he visited various cities in Italy, and had the good fortune to arrive in Rome when Pope Adrian VI, who as we saw was a native of Utrecht, occupied the papal see. The pope put him in charge of the Belvedere and had his portrait painted by Van Scorel. But two months later His Holiness died and the artist returned to his native country.

Italy was the Mecca of many painters of the Dutch school. They formed a separate guild in Rome, the *bent* as they called it in their own language. Some stayed for several years, others never returned home and became Italianized and lost to their native land. The landscape painters among them were much sought after. There was always employment for them. Carel van Mander asserts in his *Grondt der edel vry Schilder-const*

(*Foundation of the noble art of Painting*), "Little beauty is contained in a composition when the background is not well done. The Italians call us for that sort of work from abroad, for the Netherlanders are held by them to be clever at landscape, if they should praise us in anything. But they claim to excel us in figures."

Van Mander was aware that he was an innovator in devoting a chapter of his didactic poem to the landscape. His Italian predecessors did not include it in their theories of painting as a special genre. Leonardo, it is true, discussed the separate features into which the landscape can be analyzed, but he did not deal with the landscape as a whole. Employment of Dutch landscape artists in Italy had a detrimental effect upon their manner. It was responsible for the academic composition, according to strict rules, which was in vogue among the sixteenth-century Flemish painters. Van Mander defines those rules at great length: "Landscapes are usually composed out of three or four parts. The foreground must always be hard so as to make the rest recede, and furthermore show something large, as in the scenes of Bruegel and other great painters who excel in this art. In the works of these worthy men one sees in the foreground gigantic tree trunks . . . But no houses should occupy the front scene, unless it be some hovel thatched with straw. Landscape and figures should divide the foreground between them." The space beyond the foreground had to offer a receding view over cities, rivers, mountains, castles. And beyond the middle plane, in the center of the panel, a distant mountain range and a thin strip of sky.

In the hands of a very great master such as Peter Bruegel the Elder even this cut-and-dried recipe could yield a magnificent composition. But the lesser artists were hampered by it in exe-



cutting their pictures. The Fleming Gillis van Coninxloo introduced this style in Amsterdam. There is an undeniable grandeur in his landscapes, but he combined the traditional manner with a pedantic and painstaking emphasis on detail. The trees are done with irritating accuracy, each leaf being carefully copied. The structure of his landscape reminds one of a stage scene. He used to frame it within trees shooting up from either side of the foreground, like coulisses in the theatre.

Van Mander, who was one of those who had studied in Italy, also gave precise instructions how to enliven the rural scene. He thought of landscape painting as a form of storytelling or, more exactly perhaps, as an illustration of literature. "It would be good," he wrote, "if you knew your story from Scripture or poetry before you begin, so as to be able to compose your landscape accordingly. And don't forget that small figures go with large trees. When your little world is made, show the people here ploughing, there mowing, yonder loading the wagon with fodder, elsewhere fishing, sailing, bird-catching, or hunting. Show here the peasant girls milking the cows on the green bank of the river; let there Tityrus enjoy himself playing the flute, sitting with Amaryllis under the beech tree and delighting his flock with sweet music. Yea, make your land, your city, your rivers full of traffic, your houses inhabited, your roads enlivened."

Van Mander was one of those refugees from the southern Netherlands who found shelter in Holland. He was highly esteemed in Amsterdam as a painter, poet, historian, and theorist. The city's artists and men of letters staged an impressive funeral for him. He was laid in the coffin with a wreath round his head and, on the shoulders of eight men, carried to his grave in the Old Church, with a train of more than three hundred mourners. Yet the respect he commanded did not make his academic teach-

ing acceptable. Neither the example of Coninxloo nor the didacticism of Van Mander could persuade the painters of Holland to adopt the stage composition of the Italians.

They painted their land as they saw it, not according to rules taught in books. They lived in a low-lying plain under a dome of sky that seemed to dwarf their flat country. The most striking contrast between landscapes of the Holland school and those of the Flemish painters is in the difference in proportion between land and sky. In the Flemish ones, the sky is a thin strip above the horizon, in Hollandish pictures the sky occupies a larger space than the land, usually twice, sometimes three, or even four times as much. Simon de Vlieger painted a seascape which is nearly all sky with a mere suggestion of beach in the foreground. And these landscapists of the Holland school also defied Van Mander's lessons in what the Dutch call *stoffage*, the art of enlivening the scene with figures of men and beasts. They reduced their *stoffage* to a minimum, some discarded it altogether, painting, as did Jacob van Ruysdael, the fields and woods for their own virgin beauty unspoiled by the greed of man.

These painters of land and sea were pioneers who gave all Europe a new vision of natural scenery. It took a long time before their leadership was acknowledged and accepted. The great Lessing, in his *Laokoön*, a hundred years later, still thought of landscape painting in Van Mander's style, as an art of illustration that had to visualize the imaginative scenery of the poets. As if painters were not poets in their own right, poets by the grace of God.

Time, we say, is the just appraiser of human worth. Actually it is man himself who does the just appraising if he is given sufficient time. In the glare of the midday sun it is difficult for him to distinguish tones and values. He is dazzled by the glitter of reflected light and mistakes it for the sun itself. But when the

night of oblivion descends upon a passing generation he becomes aware of the greater and the lesser lights he did not notice in the daytime of its life. Stars of the second magnitude shone upon Holland in the seventeenth century without leaving a trail of glory. But since that age has passed into the night, their brilliance has gained lustre from the surrounding darkness and become apparent to all the world.

There was Pieter de Hooch, son of a Rotterdam mason and a midwife. He painted exquisite interiors, which create the impression that his life was spent among the rich and the well-to-do. But he never earned enough to buy for himself the kind of house that he portrayed with such feeling and grace. As a young man of twenty-three, when he attained the full unfolding of his talent, he could not make a living with his art and found employment as a footman with a wealthy gentleman at Delft.

His master's name was Justus de la Grange. This grandee maintained two footmen in his home. One day Pieter de Hooch's colleague absconded with a number of precious things that belonged to his employer. He left a small wardrobe behind which was sold by public auction except for a new mantle with silver braid and two shirts that he had stolen from his fellow footman and were returned to Pieter de Hooch. If it were not for the documents relating to this thievish servant, we would have no record about De Hooch at Delft. He appears in the court minutes not as an artist but as the victim of a knave. That was in 1653. Eight years later De la Grange was destitute. He had been living in great style and foolishly had squandered his fortune. He had tried to stave off the financial ruin he foresaw by paying his debts with pictures from his art collection.

In 1655 he shipped to a creditor at Hoorn forty-three paintings, including a head by Rembrandt appraised at twenty guilders, four canvases by Lievens, two by Van Goyen, together

worth no more than three guilders, a Van Beyerens valued at one hundred guilders, and ten by his footman Pieter de Hooch. Four of these were appraised at twenty guilders each, two at fifteen, three at ten, and one at six, making a total of one hundred and forty-six guilders. Even if we assume that the guilder in De Hooch's time had twenty-five times its present value, these prices are distressingly low. His picture collection could not save De la Grange from bankruptcy. In 1662 he sailed with his wife and children to New Netherland, where he had bought, with the remainder of his shattered fortune, the island of Tinicum west of the Delaware River. If De Hooch had accompanied his shiftless master, we would know better than we do what a Dutch-American home of the seventeenth century looked like. But he stayed on in Delft for several years. In the late sixties he was living in Amsterdam, and that is about all that we know about him. The year and the place of his death are a mystery. In Amsterdam there were so many of those skillful masters, that there was small news value in one of them dropping the brush. As many another of his brethren he had to wait till the nineteenth century for recognition and fame.

The prices of pictures in the seventeenth century afford a reliable gauge of the esteem in which artists were held by their contemporaries. The inventories in notarial archives explode the legend that Rembrandt's genius was not duly recognized. In 1657 two appraisers were called in to value the pictures left by the Amsterdam art dealer Johannes de Renialme. They appraised Rembrandt's "Woman taken in Adultery," now in the National Gallery in London, at fifteen hundred florins, a sum exceeding by nine hundred florins and more the highest prices occurring in the same list after names such as Dou, Van Dyck, Rubens, Claude Lorrain, Titian, Tintoretto. Rembrandt's drawings were eagerly sought after by the collectors. Van de Capelle,

the marine painter, who was also a wealthy manufacturer of dyestuffs, owned hundreds of his drawings, and Jan Boursse, a brother of Esaias the artist, possessed a nearly complete set of Rembrandt's etchings.

Johannes Vermeer was also highly valued by his contemporaries. A French courtier, M. de Monconys, who visited Holland in 1665, went to see Vermeer in his studio, but the artist had nothing to show him. He evidently sold his pictures as soon as they were finished. He did see one, though, at the home of a baker, for which the artist had received six hundred francs. But Vermeer did not leave a great fortune at his death in 1675. Painters' incomes rose and fell, as they do now, with the political ups and downs of the times. Holland in the seventies was engaged in a life-and-death struggle with France, and when a country is invaded by hostile armies, art is discarded from everyone's thoughts as a superfluous luxury. Vermeer had probably not sold any pictures in the last years of his life, for his widow saw herself forced to pawn three of his works that she treasured, so badly was she in need of ready cash.

Most of the artists of the seventeenth century were born when Holland was at war with Spain and fighting for her very existence. Frans Hals was a baby in arms when his native city of Antwerp fell into the hands of the Spaniards. Rembrandt's father was a little boy when Leyden was besieged by Valdez' troops. He was painted by his son as a sickly man grown old prematurely. His lack of vitality may well have been due to the starvation diet on which he lived for a year in the invested city. Vermeer was sixteen years old when the peace of Westphalia was signed. All three belonged to a generation that was constantly aware of war's alarums. Yet their art and that of their fellow craftsmen is neither a satire nor a glorification of war. They ignored it with the supreme contempt of creative spirits

for the fury of destruction. The peace of the sunlit home was Vermeer's and De Hooch's theme. If Rembrandt painted scenes of war, it was of man at war with his inmost self. And Hals, older than they and therefore nearer to the most perilous period of the eighty years' conflict with Spain, was the painter of laughter and the joy of life, which do not burst forth except in the security of peace.

It is only natural that it should be so. The artist's studio is dedicated to the work of creation, the battlefield to that of destruction. The studio, too, is a scene of combat, the struggle of the artist's craft with the stubborn material that he must master and force to his will. But the result of his conquest is a work of art that will add beauty to a home in the land of peace.

In seventeenth-century Holland, where men and women had fought and suffered not for glory but for freedom, war was loathed as a curse from the devil and peace was blessed as a gift from God. And her art was the most eloquent and moving hymn of thanksgiving that the nation offered to its Maker. There is an intimate relationship between the freedom the Dutch people won for themselves and the marvelous flowering of their art. For the painter, being a creator, needs untrammelled freedom for the play of his fancy. In a nation of soldiers where everything and everybody is regimented, art must starve like a lily in the desert. In the free cities of the Dutch Republic, where Dutch burghers lived under the beneficent rule of mightier fellow burghers, each individual enjoyed security from injustice and arbitrary abuse of power. The right of free speech was recognized by the burgomasters and given free play by the outspoken citizens. And the painters, who spoke with the brush, revealed to the listening eye every phase of Dutch life with a frankness and uninhibited sincerity that made it an open book to all the world.

## CHAPTER X

### IN THE DOLDRUMS

IN EVERY language ancient wisdom lies embedded of which the speakers are seldom aware. We use words and phrases in which the experience of the distant past has been crystallized; but we use them so mechanically in everyday intercourse that we fail to realize the beauty and the effectiveness of those thought crystals. Only the linguist, whose business it is to study speech, collects and treasures them and often wonders whether the language is not wiser than its speakers. The Dutch word for war is *oorlog*, an ancient Germanic compound, which the etymologists have not been able to explain satisfactorily. Its original meaning was, most likely, dissolution, decomposition; it certainly never expressed our primitive ancestors' glorification of war. The Dutch language knows also the word *war*, but it has there the exclusive sense of confusion. Politicians and flag-waving patriots may shout from platforms and palace balconies that war is a glorious exploit and that it is beautiful to die for the fatherland, but the language, which voices ancient experience, knows that war is synonymous with confusion and condemns it explicitly. The phrase *in de war* is used in Dutch as a euphemism for crazy. War is confusion worse confounded, and a world at war is indeed a world gone mad.

The Dutch of the seventeenth century were not sufficiently articulate nor politically organized to make their abhorrence of war prevail in the councils of the mighty. There was one man

among them, though, who gave powerful voice to their anti-war feelings. His memory is honored in the church at Delft where he lies buried beneath a decorative stained-glass window, the gift of eight hundred members of the Bench and Bar of the United States. It shows fifteen incidents in the life of Hugo Grotius from his student days in Leyden to his deathbed at Rostock. There is no scene of his childhood and it is indeed difficult to think of Grotius as a child. Joep Nicolas, the artist who designed and executed the window, might have shown little Hugo driving his hoop across the market place of Delft, but I doubt whether he ever indulged in such frivolities. He composed Latin elegies at an age when other children are learning to spell, and entered the university as a boy of eleven.

He was graduated in 1597, when he was fourteen years old, and when in the following year the States General sent two special envoys to Henry IV, king of France, the young scholar was sent along with them as a prodigy for the French court to marvel at. He studied law for a short while at Orleans, returned to Holland in 1599, and started a law practice at The Hague at the age of fifteen. But at that time jurisprudence was to him the least interesting of his many pursuits. He preferred to study Greek and Latin literature, he prepared scholarly editions of classical authors, wrote a drama in Latin called *Adamus Exul* (1601), and accepted a commission from the States of Holland to write a history of the Dutch war against Spain. An incident of that war, the capture of a Portuguese merchantman by the Hollanders in the East Indies, became the occasion of his first contribution to the literature of international law, a *Commentary on the Right of Booty*, which, however, was not printed in his own lifetime. Only a chapter of it was printed anonymously in 1609 as a separate treatise on the freedom of the seas.

The Dutch Republic was at that time negotiating a truce



with Spain, and the Dutch East India Company had Grotius bring out this pamphlet in defense of its claim to unrestricted navigation between Europe and the East Indies. Though it was aimed at Spanish imperialism, it caused more resentment in London than in Madrid, for King James I regarded it as a challenge to England's sea power. Grotius was one of four special envoys sent to the British court in 1613 to represent Holland's views on the use of the sea as an international highway. In later life he prided himself on the success he achieved by this mission, although, to judge from King James's description of him as "a pedant full of words and without judgment," he does not seem to have made a deep impression on that discriminating monarch.

Shortly before this visit to London he had been appointed Pensionary of the city of Rotterdam, in which capacity he had to act as legal counsel to the burgomasters and to the city's delegation to the assembly of the States of Holland. As a supporter of Holland's leading statesman, Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, he became involved in the political dissensions that brought the Republic to the verge of civil war, and was condemned for his part in them to lifelong imprisonment in the castle of Loevestein. Two years later he escaped from his prison and found a refuge for the rest of his life in the French capital. Thus it happened that the first edition of his masterpiece *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (*Of the Right of War and Peace*) appeared in Paris, from the printing house of Nicholas Buon.

The cardinal point in the teaching of Grotius is his contention that states which wage aggressive war are criminals and should be punished as individual criminals are; and that a war waged in punishment of a malignant state is the only justifiable war. In the community of states, he taught, there is a code of duties that can and ought to be defined as are the duties of individual citizens. For states to obey that code is not a question of noble

virtue or Christian self-denial, but a matter of self-interest. That citizen, he reasoned, is not a fool who respects the law of the land even when it interferes with his self-interest; nor is it folly for a state not to break the law of nations, though breaking it might serve its immediate interest, for the state which infringes international law undermines the foundations of its own stability no less than the citizen does who breaks the law of the land.

Four years before his death Hugo Grotius wrote to his brother at The Hague, "If the Christian princes heeded my warning, there would be no war between them; they would rather waive some part of their sovereignty or select good arbiters." He never dreamed of a league of nations. He simply stated what he considered to be the duty of all states if they wished to ward off their own fall and the destruction of Europe. But the diplomacy of the age for which he wrote bore the stamp of that great Christian statesman, Cardinal Richelieu. The Dutch thinker and the French Secretary of State knew each other, but their acquaintance had no effect upon the fate of Europe. The rulers and diplomats of that age, hardheaded, practical men of affairs, saw in Grotius a starry-eyed idealist devoid of knowledge of the workaday world. They praised his astounding learning, his theories on the law of nations, on the relation between religion and reason, on criminal law, and they praised the profusion of his classical quotations and his exegesis of scriptural texts. They treated him as Milton was treated by an eighteenth-century Amsterdam rhymester, who, admiring "that inimitable work 'Paradise Lost' for its wealth of divine, ethical, physical, astronomical, geographical, and political lore" undertook to translate it into Dutch alexandrines, thus shackling the heroic poem again in "the troublesome and modern bondage of rhiming." In the same way the seventeenth-century eulogists of

Grotius failed to recognize the main point of his teaching, the way to recover liberty to the world from the troublesome and modern bondage of anarchy.

The peace of Westphalia of 1648 brought the Dutch Republic a brief period of external peace. Four years later fresh hostilities started. This time the enemy was England. The two maritime powers, neither willing to concede the other's supremacy on the high seas, waged three naval wars in a quarter of a century. Their outbreak brought to a head the long-latent rivalry between the Amsterdam exchange and the city of London for the monopoly of world commerce. Weakening each other, they strengthened the position of France, whose ruler, King Louis XIV, was striving for the hegemony of the Continent. Not until England and the Republic were united under one ruler, the King-*Stadt*-holder William, Prince of Orange, did the sun king's ambition meet with a fall. But the wars with France in which the Republic as England's ally became engaged taxed the economic and spiritual strength of the nation to the breaking point, and the effects of the strain became apparent in the years of peace that followed the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.

The Republic's vitality had been sapped by repeated bleeding, and the exhausted body needed a long rest to recover from its exhaustion. A state of somnolence set in which gave the country an aspect of hypnotic peace. Two German travelers, the brothers Uffenbach, visited the Republic in the early years of the eighteenth century. When they arrived in the town of Dokkum they sent a message to the headmaster of the Latin school to ask him for an interview. The good man, they wrote, came at once to their inn, "in his sleeping robe according to the Hollandish fashion." The garb is symptomatic of a drowsy state of mind. It was not unbecoming, for these sleeping robes were handsome dressing gowns made of materials imported from Turkey and

decorated with flowery designs. The joy in beautiful things was not dead, but they wanted things beautiful on which their ancestors would have scorned to waste beauty.

The semblance of life stilled to inaction lends to the eighteenth century a peculiar charm. The Dutch people were indeed active enough in their quiet, unobtrusive way. The women were as busy cleaning and running their households—and their husbands as well—as their grandmothers had been in a more strenuous age, and the men went about their work in office, warehouse, and workshop with traditional punctiliousness and industry. But they moved by routine, the inner drive was gone. They were satisfied with the wealth amassed and carried on business as of old without any desire for expansion or fresh enterprise. The go-getting fervor of their grandfathers did not possess them. They were collectors of books and manuscripts, of paintings and prints, of coins and medals, of curios from foreign lands. They laid out formal gardens and cultivated rare and exotic plants. Foreigners came to the Netherlands in increasing numbers to visit the many private collections. The connoisseurs who came with reliable credentials were always welcome to the proud owners. The Swedish botanist Linnaeus was the guest for a time of the wealthy banker G. Clifford, who had a magnificent garden in the neighborhood of Haarlem. He arranged Clifford's collection of plants and published a description of it in his *Hortus Cliffortianus* (1737). The brothers Uffenbach, in every town they came to, went the round of the cabinets, as these collections were called, and made careful notes of the principal treasures they inspected. Their tedious account of the journey is of value to the historian, as it is practically a catalogue of the precious things then to be found in the possession of Dutch owners.

Literary and scientific societies popularized foreign ideas and

inventions among the upper and middle classes, translations spread a knowledge of what was being written abroad both in the fields of fiction and scholarship, and Justus van Effen, editor of *De Hollandsche Spectator*, the first of many imitations of *The Spectator* of Addison and Steele, entertained and instructed an ever-widening circle of readers. The nation did not produce anything original itself; its participation in imaginative and scientific writing was merely passive. Original novels were so rare that Elizabeth Wolff and Agatha Deken, who together wrote novels in the epistolary form made popular by Samuel Richardson, found it necessary to advertise on the title page of their first venture into print that the book was "Not Translated." It was indeed so good a story that the claim of originality seemed hardly credible to the reading public, but the accurate portrayal of Dutch life and manners dispelled all doubt. These two women had produced a little masterpiece that remained without rivals in their lifetime.

The two were typical representatives of the enlightened section of the Dutch middle class that strove for freedom from the traditionalism of theology. They had read English deists and were influenced by their trend of thought, which made a strong appeal to all Dutchmen who questioned the authority of the Reformed Church. The large number of religious sects and the impossibility of reconciling their differences were prejudicial to the validity of the common ground on which all protestantism was based. The Collegiants found in English deism fresh food for their scepticism. The old certainties supplied by revealed religion were no longer believed; they had ceased to give spiritual support. A new concept of the universe was replacing the traditional one in which God's personal intervention was felt as an ever-present reality. Man himself became the center of his world, himself the welder of his destiny, and God, eliminated

from that human world, became an abstract principle, the primeval cause that sent it on its temporal, purely mechanical way.

The deists were not irreligious; they claimed, at any rate, to believe in a divine power, but a power aloof from the workaday world and restricted to the maintenance of the natural and moral order. Their crusade was a defiance of the accepted theology, not a rebellion against religion. The target of their hostility was not the Church but the intolerance, prejudice, and ignorance that were fostered by the Church.

The deists in England were not a class of professional men, but represented every rank in the community. The same is true of the writers who conducted an anti-clerical campaign in the Netherlands. Many belonged to the handicrafts; a weaver, a shoemaker, a basketmaker were among the popularizers of a Spinozistic philosophy. Willem Deurhof, the basketmaker, proclaimed Reason to be the one and only law, and called man accountable to God alone, who is the origin of Reason. Pieter Bakker, who had a hosiery store in Amsterdam, was a professed deist and published anonymously in 1752 a booklet in which he listed the six articles of faith that have been common from the beginning of time until now "to Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, even Heathen I admit." This concession, "even Heathen, I admit," implied the author's awareness of the danger of such an admission. It was hazardous enough to identify the law of nature with the law of Christ, for the assertion that these six articles of faith had been the possession of all mankind from the dawn of human life amounted to that. But it was sacrilege to include the heathen among the fellow believers of Christians. In the following decade a heated controversy raged between orthodox churchmen and rationalists over the latter's contention that salvation was possible for virtuous heathen. The polemic was started by the publication of a Dutch edition of the novel

*Bélisaire* by the French deist Marmontel, in which the hero, a general of Emperor Justinianus, expounds to his master the tenets of his religion. The crucial point of his argument is that the virtuous heathen is the equal of his Christian fellow man. The chief spokesman of the orthodox went so far in his anti-pagan zeal as to deny all virtue to the heathen, even to the noblest of heathen, Socrates. This assertion was sacrilege to his deist opponents, who revered the Greek philosopher as a saint; the polemic that ensued, the Socratic war so-called, registered the heat that was engendered by the discussion of such questions.

The rationalists were well aware that by discrediting dogma they weakened the moral support that the Church had supplied in the past. They had to replace it by a code of ethics that stressed the necessity of cultivating the moral sense, the faculty that determines the value of our actions. Conscience, they recognized, is primarily an emotional reaction in which reflection has no part; but education and usage, they believed, could make it a product of our reason, the source of all that is beautiful and noble in man. The Calvinist Church taught that man was born in sin and could not contribute by a good life to his ultimate salvation; that doctrine was not calculated to make of school education a training in morals. An early eighteenth-century preacher dared proclaim that sin was only a lack of true knowledge. If that were so, there was sense in teaching the young the way to virtue.

The eighteenth century was, accordingly, much more concerned about the problem of bringing up children than its predecessor had been. But that rationalistic age was ill calculated to solve it to the child's benefit, for children are irrational creatures who live in a world of make-believe. Their nimble, Pucklike minds thrive on extravagance. They are as serious about their fantasies as the grownups about their facts. Their reality is the dream, a more authentic reality than the man's world of facts

because it is their own creation. Children are born poets, and if they could write their dreams, the world's literature would be greatly enriched. But they get trained for the world of facts, and in its arid clime the dream shrivels and is forgotten. Few are the happy ones in whose memory the child survives to make poetry of the remembered dream.

Hieronymus van Alphen never doubted the accuracy of his memory and undertook to write a book of *Short Poems for Children*. They were published in 1778 and acclaimed at once as a charming educational novelty. Reprints followed each other in rapid succession and in the course of the nineteenth century Van Alphen's little book was translated into German, French, English, Frisian, and Malay. The enduring popularity of these poems proves that they met a widely felt need. There was no poetry for children at the time of their appearance, and Van Alphen, therefore, was a pioneer and a benefactor. That his verses retained the affection of succeeding generations is harder to understand. To admire them had become a revered tradition, to poke fun at them was held to be sacrilege. My grandmother used to recite them to me, and now, myself a grandfather, I cannot remember any childhood poetry except Van Alphen's. I could repeat his verses after her without understanding their meaning. The poet's aim was, as he defined it, "to put into rhyme some useful truths in such a way as to make them comprehensible to children." He did not make them comprehensible to me. Too often he used bookish terms that conveyed no sense to a child's mind.

It may be that the little ones of Van Alphen's time were precocious hothouse plants. They do look prematurely old and wise in the pictures that go with the poems. The little boys and girls are miniature copies of their parents and gesture as these do. Van Alphen's children all belong to the best families and the



homes that figure in the illustrations are aristocratic interiors. In one of these, four children occupy the foreground and their parents are seen through an open door in the adjoining room. Mother is seated by the window and is being presented by father with a peach from the garden and an affectionate kiss. The eldest boy, in knee breeches, coat tails, and periwig, improves this touching scene by holding it up as an edifying example to his bad-tempered sister and quarreling brothers. With an elegant gesture of his upraised arm he points at the amorous couple and declaims:

*Dearest sister, dearest brothers,  
O I feel we are to blame  
That we all too often quarrel.  
I admit it to my shame.  
Dear ones, let us seek each other's  
Joy and profit, let us share  
In the good attempt to copy  
Mother's goodness, father's care.  
Only there has love its dwelling,  
Only there is homelife blest  
Where each does with willing gladness  
All that is for other's best.*

There can be no objection to Van Alphen's intention to teach young urchins some useful truths in rhyme, but he destroyed their usefulness by making little urchins themselves the teachers of his unchildish wisdom. Children do not like to be preached to by hypocritical prigs of their own age. "My playing is learning, my learning is playing," harangues one of these, "and why then should my lessons bore me? I get entertainment out of reading and writing. I shall exchange my hoop and top for books and look for pastime in my pictures. It is wisdom and virtue for which I yearn." If Van Alphen knew a boy in the flesh who was

the model for this portrait, he must have been shunned by all boys of his age. Van Alphen knew, of course, that the love of books is a remedy for loneliness. If only he had said it himself; but he made his prig say it to a couple of little scamps who look in from the street through the open window and laugh at the precocious scholar among his books.

Boys will be boys in every age and clime. There never were such children as Van Alphen depicted. His little poems are counsels of perfection unattainable for the little darlings. The marvel is that his ideal of perfection was accepted by the parents in good earnest. It was the Age of Reason, which denied the reality of the dream. It was insensitive to the child's imaginings and, being unaware of its mentally living in another world, it could not reach the child's mind with its factual wisdom. For more than half a century Van Alphen's *Short Poems for Children* retained the uncritical favor of Holland's adult population.

It took courage to defy the approving mothers and criticize the idolized poet. A young minister of the Dutch Reformed Church had that courage. Nicolaas Beets, using the pen name Hildebrand, wrote in the thirties of the nineteenth century two essays on children that show a knowledge of the workings of their minds such as was denied to Van Alphen. "A man of forty has traveled away so far from his fifth year," he wrote, "and has meanwhile forgotten so much, that he does not know any more what he thought, felt, realized, and enjoyed when he was a child." It never occurred to Van Alphen that his memory might have been helpful in understanding children. He created his little ones in the image of his grown-up self; he never saw them as did Hildebrand. "Madame," says the latter to the mother of a precious Van Alphen precocity, "Madame, when I talk about Dutch boys, I do not mean your little pale-nosed son with blue circles under his eyes. He is, I admit, a marvel of early develop-

ment, but what does that amount to? . . . Do you know what you will make of your darling Francis? A sneak, a telltale, and a coward." The attack in this vein was repeated by another youthful divine, the poet De Genestet. "I need not describe to you," he told his hearers, "what impression Van Alphen makes upon me; for he stands clearly portrayed in the frontispiece of the illustrated edition: a corpulent old gentleman in a capacious dressing gown in front of his desk in a high, unfurnished, forbidding study. At a respectable distance from his dignity, intimidated and bashful, holding onto each other as if they were afraid of being eaten, a couple of tiny mites in little jackets, to whom His Honor hands some papers from his armchair, the manuscript of his *Short Poems*. But that is not my conception of a children's poet."

A society that thought of its children as Charles Grandisons in the bud was naturally receptive to the sentimental literature that came out of England. Richardson's novels and Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* were available in Dutch translations. It was a literature that appealed to a generation that enjoyed the blessings of peace and lived in the delusion that they were destined to last. Manly sports had no part in the training of Van Alphen's hopefuls. The poet and the doting parents had apparently no inkling of the approaching revolution, which the goody-goody prigs of the *Short Poems for Children* were ill prepared to face.

The people in the southern Netherlands were equally devoted to the peaceful life, but they lacked wealth to enjoy it as their countrymen did in the north. They had reason to hate war, for their country had borne the brunt of nearly every continental conflict in the age of Louis XIV. It was the cockpit of Europe, and the rural folk were the chief sufferers whenever the cocks flew at each other's throats. Their crops were trampled down, their

cattle, horse and cart stolen, their homes ransacked, their land left untilled. Unemployment followed in the wake of each war, and gangs of beggars and bandits infested the countryside. In the midst of this misery occasions for feasting, such as kermises, weddings, and funerals, were seized upon with bestial abandon.

Economically, the Low Countries in the south were badly disrupted. The exodus of Calvinists after the fall of Antwerp had depleted the country of various handicrafts and skills. The commerce of Antwerp was paralyzed as a result of the closure of the Scheldt by the Dutch Republic, which treated the city as an enemy port after Parma had occupied it for his king. And Colbert's mercantilist policy had robbed the languishing industries of their French markets. The once-flourishing provinces of Flanders and Brabant were now populated by a people in distress who, enslaved under Spanish rule, lacked the will and the energy to rise to achievement that could emulate the past. After Rubens, who died in 1640, Antwerp could no longer compete with Amsterdam as a center of artistic production. The country that had been a well of music, a century before, had ceased to produce anything comparable to the compositions of Cipriano da Rore and his contemporaries. And its literature had sunk below the level of mediocrity, the only author who attained some measure of distinction being but a minor Jacob Cats.

Learning also was at a low ebb. Long after Copernicus, the university of Louvain continued to teach medieval cosmography. Medical practice was carried on in the old haphazard way as if Vesalius had never lived and Boerhaave were not teaching a modern art of healing at Leyden. Only the work of the Bollandists redeems this period in the history of the southern Low Countries from total insignificance. They were members of the Society of Jesus, who undertook the task of publishing the *Acta Sanctorum*, the great collection of biographies and legends of

the saints arranged by days in the order of the calendar. The plan for this gigantic enterprise was conceived by the Flemish Jesuit Heribert Rosweyde, who published in 1607 a prospectus of the work he had in mind. When he died in 1629 he had amassed a large amount of material but the actual work of publication had not yet begun. Another Jesuit father, Jan Bolland, was sent to Antwerp to take over and he, with the assistance of Godfried Henschen, who was appointed his co-editor in 1635, brought out the first two volumes for January in 1643. The editorial activities of the Bollandists, in spite of repeated setbacks and the temporary suppression of the Society of Jesus in Belgium, was continued all through the two succeeding centuries. The array of the many volumes they have published is an imposing monument to their industry and learning.

The Catholic Church, as the ally of the Spanish government in Brussels, became with the state's support an unassailable stronghold in the southern Netherlands. Antwerp and the chief cities of Flanders were centers of the Catholic revival. The decisions of the Council of Trent were everywhere put into effect. The Church saw to it that the priests received better training and lived according to the rules laid down at Trent for the regulation of their moral life. The revival was further promoted by the monastic orders, of which there were so many that they were in danger of suffocating each other. The Jesuits were active everywhere. In their schools the forces were trained that helped to strengthen and to perpetuate the authority of Church and State. The pomp and ceremony of the Catholic liturgy had always appealed to the Belgian people, and now that the priests conducted themselves in a manner that commanded respect, the faithful attended mass with genuine piety and devotion. As economic conditions worsened, the Church regained ever more firmly its medieval hold of the populace. In their misery they had no better

consolation than their faith and hope in a higher power. The Church of Rome was their refuge and spiritual stronghold, and the clergy did their best to keep the people's affection alive by founding charitable institutions, holding processions, organizing pilgrimages, and encouraging the worship of local saints.

The peace treaty of Utrecht of 1713 provided for the transfer of the Spanish Netherlands to Austrian sovereignty. The shift averted the danger, greatly dreaded at The Hague, of their becoming a province of France, and of France's becoming a next-door neighbor of the Dutch Republic. Yet, in order to make surety doubly sure, the Dutch obtained the right to garrison a string of fortresses along the French frontier; and their right to close the navigation on the Scheldt was again ratified by a European treaty. Hence the Treaty of Utrecht did not hold any blessings for the inhabitants of the erstwhile Spanish Netherlands. They remained unfree and subject to a foreign ruler, and their commerce remained throttled by the denial of free access to the sea.

Spanish absolutism had not succeeded in suppressing local autonomies and provincial particularism. Austrian rule was not any more successful. The people's representatives still clung to the right of their provinces not to be taxed without their consent. When the Marquis de Prié, imperial governor from 1719 to 1726, attempted to rule the provinces as an Austrian dependency, he came up against stubborn opposition and was driven to extreme measures that reminded the people of the cruelty of the Duke of Alba's regime. A leader of the popular opposition, Frans Anneesens, was beheaded at Brussels in the first year of De Prié's administration; but his death was not heeded as a warning but admired as a noble example of martyrdom to the cause of national liberty.

The strain was relaxed under the rule of the Empress Maria

Theresa, who was popular with the masses. She appointed her brother-in-law, Charles of Lorraine, to the governorship, which he retained for forty years. He encouraged the rise of new industries, improved roads and canals, and the harbor facilities of Ostend. Increasing prosperity and greater security made for general contentment, which was favorable to his set policy of establishing an absolute and centralizing authority. He succeeded in reducing the indigenous courts and local governmental bodies to mere shadow institutions and, being an amiable man, made his absolutism acceptable. But his caution and wisdom were thrown to the wind by Maria Theresa's son and successor, Emperor Joseph II, a youthful rationalist and enthusiastic adherent of the German enlightenment, whose ill-considered reform measures, liberal though they were, created greater resentment than Charles of Lorraine's absolutism.

He tried first of all to take away, for the people's own good, as he thought, part of the power of the Catholic Church, without realizing how deeply attached they were to all that the Church stood for. He also conceived the plan of abolishing the antiquated guild system, which he considered incompatible with modern trends in industrial development. But here again his good intentions were not appreciated. The guilds in the industrial cities had their representatives in the municipal governments and influenced through these the decisions in the provincial states. Interference with the guilds meant interference with the age-old political system of the country; the two were so inextricably interwoven that the people's attachment to the latter made them tolerant of guild abuses. They would rather see the guilds maintained with all their faults than have their local and provincial governments forced to conform to the centralizing tendencies of Vienna.

Brabant was the first to rebel. On December 11, 1789, the peo-

ple of Brussels attacked the Austrian garrison and compelled it to capitulate, and two weeks later the States of Brabant proclaimed their independence. The other provinces followed Brabant's lead, and in January, 1790, Joseph II, who had striven so earnestly to turn the Austrian Netherlands into a model commonwealth, was confronted by his ungrateful subjects with a revolutionary proclamation by which they declared themselves an independent Republic, to be called the Belgian United States. He was at a loss how to account for this irrational behavior. "Madness seems to have seized all these people," he said to the French diplomat Louis Philippe, Comte de Ségur; "those of Brabant revolt because I want to give them what your nation passionately demands." These "mad" Belgians were prompted by motives similar to those that had driven their sixteenth-century ancestors to rise up in arms against the king of Spain. Archaic conservatism, a jealous love of their ancient rights and privileges, made them blind to the blessings of the emperor's well-intentioned reforms.

Joseph II died a few weeks after these events, and his successor, Leopold II, had order restored at the end of the year with the help of strong Austrian forces. The revolt petered out, its leaders fled the country, the form of government as it existed at the close of Maria Theresa's reign was re-established, and the people were reduced to sullen submission. They were in the mood to hail any change though it were for the worse. The change was brought them from revolutionary France. Her armies overran the country, put an end to Austrian rule, and imposed by force of arms the very reforms that Joseph II had tried to introduce by peaceful means. The Belgian United States lost their identity and became an integral part of France to share in the destinies of the Republic and the Empire.

Even in the Dutch Republic there was discontent and inter-



mittent unrest, though the people were ruled by masters of their own nationality and the country seemed prosperous and secure. But security and prosperity were enjoyed by only part of its burghers. The working classes possessed neither, and their sense of being the nation's disinherited grew more acute as the contrast between their own poverty and the wealth of the upper ten became more apparent. Everyone who counted among the *mijnheers* possessed a stately house in town and a country place in the dunes or the polder. Private carriages, sleighs, yachts, flaunted the wealth of their owners along streets and canals. Sensational bankruptcies in the sixties and seventies made the common burgher aware of speculation scandals and suspicious of worse scandals yet unrevealed. Taxes were oppressive: everything was taxed, it was said, except the air that one breathed. But neither their number nor the burden they imposed were resented so much as was the manner of their collection. This was farmed out, and the farmers profited more than the towns and the provinces; they fattened on the money they squeezed out of the taxpayers, and their avidity fed on their growing wealth. They were the best-hated men in the Republic. By the middle of the century the people's patience was at an end. In several towns the houses of the tax collectors were wrecked by angry rioters, and only the menace of worse tumults extorted from the authorities the abolition of the iniquitous practice. It was changed for a system under which the taxes were collected by salaried officials. Only in the provinces of Zeeland and Gelderland did the tax farmers carry on as of old.

Another abuse, which proved a lucrative business for the Amsterdam rulers, was the city's foreign-mail monopoly. The metropolis was anxious, of course, to receive as soon as possible, and sooner than others, mail that might be important for its commerce. It collected the French mail at Antwerp, whence

mounted postilions carried it to Amsterdam; and there the mail for Rotterdam was separated from the rest and sent thither by *trekschuit*; and the city had the mail from England intercepted at the mouth of the Maas, not wishing to receive it via Rotterdam. The revolutionary upsurge that made short shrift of the tax farmers also overthrew this Amsterdam monopoly. A central post office was established at Alfen on the Rhine, a little town east of Leyden, and from there all foreign mail was distributed. The proceeds of this service went to the Prince of Orange, who turned them over to the provincial treasury. Only the Hamburg mail remained a monopoly of Amsterdam.

These reform measures marked a tendency toward centralization, not yet, it is true, on a national, but at least on a provincial scale. They were introduced under the stadtholderate of William IV (1747-51), the first to hold that office in all the United Provinces. The clamor of the masses had brought him to power at a time when the country was threatened by an invasion of French forces. The oligarchs had ruled for more than thirty years without a stadtholder, and they were naturally blamed for the predicament in which the country found itself. Unfortunately, Prince William IV was not the kind of man to make good use of the almost dictatorial power that was thrust upon him. His timorous mind was suspicious of popular movements. A conservative by nature, he felt a closer affinity to the privileged class that had barred him from power than to the masses to which he owed it; he was not willing to side with rebels against the *mijnheers*.

Under his son and successor, Prince William V (1751-95), all discontented elements began to seek each other and formed a loose coalition without clearly defined aims. Claiming to be the sole defenders of Dutch honor and dignity, which the Prince by his weak-kneed subservience to British dictation had ignobly

surrendered, they called themselves the party of the Patriots. It was a strange alliance of heterogeneous elements; radical thinkers who had read Price and Priestley, Voltaire and Rousseau, enlightened *mijnheers* who did not see eye to eye with the majority of their caste, and prominent noblemen from Friesland, Overijssel, and Gelderland who were actuated by rancor against the supremacy of Holland within the Republic. That supremacy, they felt, was no longer justified, neither politically nor economically, for a disastrous naval war with England (1780-84) had paralyzed Holland's shipping and commerce, whereas the growing importance of agriculture was bringing the rural areas of the Republic to the fore. In Overijssel the Patriots agitated against the survival of feudal exactions and when they succeeded in getting these abolished the grateful farmers rallied to the party's support. Thus for the first time in the Republic's history the peasantry was drawn into the political arena.

The province of Utrecht, thanks to its central position, gained in political importance as that of Holland began to wane. It had a strong Roman Catholic minority. The Catholics had always been treated with tolerance, but were nevertheless regarded as second-class burghers. They gladly joined a liberal party that promised them political equality with their Protestant fellow citizens. For similar reasons the Patriots were popular with the Mennonites, Collegiants, Remonstrants, and other dissenters.

This heterogeneity was a cause of weakness. It was not the party's only one. It also suffered from being a movement exclusively of the middle and upper classes. The handicraftsmen and the mill workers, always scantily paid by their employers, had been pauperized by the war with England and were on the verge of starvation; yet the Patriots did not seek the support of the proletarians. These were always pro-Orange, and

since they blamed their misery, and rightly so, upon the war with England, which the anti-Orangist party had provoked, they remained loyal to their prince.

The breach with England was hailed by the Patriots as a defeat for the Anglophile prince. But when the Republic, after four years of fighting, counted among its worst casualties its international prestige, the carrying trade, and territory in India, they sang another tune and blamed him for the desolate condition of the army and navy.

In 1787 the sorely tried stadtholder received efficient aid from abroad. His young wife, a high-spirited German princess, was the sister of the King of Prussia. One day, when en route to Holland, she was refused admission into the province by a volunteer corps of Patriots, whose action was subsequently approved by the States of Holland. This insult supplied her royal brother with a convenient excuse for intervention. His armed forces invaded the Republic, the Patriots fled across the border, and the Orangists flattered themselves with the hope that the dynasty was safely restored to its ancient rights.

It was a Pyrrhic victory. Thousands of Patriots fled to Paris, "the university of revolution and patriotism," as one of them called it. Trained and indoctrinated in that school, they came back in the nineties with the armed forces of revolutionary France. No resistance was attempted; on the contrary, the bringers of fraternity, equality, and liberty were hailed, as they were by the Belgians, as brothers and friends, and the Prince of Orange went into voluntary exile.

The volcanic eruption that had its center in Paris shook the entire Continent, and the Dutch Republic, long tottering on its foundations, collapsed in the general earthquake. A new revolutionary commonwealth arose upon its ruins, the Batavian Republic so-called. But events moved fast in those days. The

Patriots were still feverishly at work setting their political home in working order when Napoleon, who had meanwhile risen to power in France, decided to make his brother Louis King of Holland. The Patriots were not asked for their consent. They were simply ordered to accept the new form of government. If they refused, Napoleon warned them, the Batavian Republic would be annexed. They bowed to the inevitable and accepted the foreigner from Corsica as their king.

Their compliance won them only a brief stay of the final execution. An autonomous Holland was incompatible with the emperor's Continental system, by which he hoped to starve England into surrender. The Dutch seaports were so many loopholes through which supplies from the Continent could reach British harbors. King Louis was too lenient with his Dutch subjects. He was accused by his brother of courting popularity by failing to enforce the law against trade with England and conniving at the lucrative smuggling activities of the Hollanders. In 1809 the English effected a landing on the Dutch island of Walcheren, and although this commando raid finally miscarried, it had brought unwelcome proof that Napoleon's Continental fortress was less impregnable than he would have the world believe. He seized upon the incident as a pretext for his brother's removal. King Louis was summoned to Paris and forced to sign a treaty by which he ceded all the land south of the Maas, promised strict prohibition of all commerce with England, accepted customs inspection by imperial appointees and submitted to occupation of the river mouths by an army corps of eighteen thousand men. But when Marshal Oudinot, Duke of Reggio, the commander of these troops, received orders from Napoleon to occupy Amsterdam, which Louis had made his capital, the latter resigned and left his kingdom; and Holland, incorporated with the empire, was no more.

## CHAPTER XI

### UNION AND DIVORCE

THE DUTCH remember the years of their subjection to Napoleon with a sense of humiliation and shame. Their ancestors who suffered under his rule recalled with nostalgic regret the good old days of the Republic, when peace and plenty prevailed and government orders were issued in the native language. As a part of the French empire their country shared none of its glories but all of its sacrifices. It lost its colonies to England, it saw its merchant marine decimated by the British fleet, its people reduced to poverty by unemployment, its youth enlisted in the imperial armies and marched away to the shambles of the battlefield. Fifteen thousand Dutch boys were forced to follow the emperor into Russia, and only a few hundred returned to tell the story of their sufferings.

Holland under the rule of Hitler's Nazis has often been compared with Holland under Napoleon. History, it is said, repeats itself. But it arranges its repetitions in such a way as to throw the variations into relief. When one places the picture of the earlier occupation side by side with its later duplicate, it is not their similarity that strikes one most but the differences that disturb the likeness. Hitler's rule bred in every Dutch patriot's heart a fierce hatred of all things German. There was no such hatred of France and all that France stood for in Napoleon's days. The withdrawal of the French administration after the emperor's defeat at Leipzig was not accompanied by revengeful

bloodshed. The collaborators of that period were not traitors in the eyes of their compatriots. They were looked upon as adherents of a political party that was unpopular, to be sure, with the rank and file of the populace, but they did not bear the stigma of treason. The anti-French majority thought them misguided but had no desire to see them hanged or shot as criminals. There was no underground organization of resistance. Justice and tact informed the French administration. It is only by the opposites of these that secret defiance is fostered among the oppressed. The underground movement under the Nazis thrived on German injustice and brute force.

It is not exclusively due, though, to the terroristic methods of the Nazis that the comparison between the Dutch people's feelings toward their enemies of the early nineteenth century and of the recent forties turns out so much more favorable to the French. The events that preceded the French occupation were so many steps by which the Dutch nation was gradually led into submission under the French yoke. They were shell-shocked into a daze by the suddenness of the German invasion. In 1940, Holland and Belgium were treacherously pounced upon and conquered by overwhelming odds. In 1810, the French army that entered the Low Countries did not come to conquer the country by warfare but to occupy it peacefully, for that occupation was merely the unblushing proclamation of a long-accomplished fact made acceptable to the Dutch people by a clever pretense of Napoleon. Since 1795 Holland had been a dependency of revolutionary France. The Dutch themselves, or to be more exact, the anti-Orange party of Patriots, had welcomed the soldiers of the revolution as harbingers of fraternity, equality, and liberty. Oudinet's march upon Amsterdam was not a treacherous surprise attack but a military consolidation of Napoleon's political hold upon Holland, a hold that his

brother's humane and beneficent rule had made bearable to the Dutch. And Oudinot performed his mission with great tact and moderation. Several months after his departure from Holland the city council of Amsterdam sent a deputation to Paris to present him with a costly sword in token of their own and their fellow citizens' gratitude.

It might be argued that this tribute was not so much a testimony of their sincere esteem for the marshal as proof of their abject subservience to Napoleon. The magistrates were hoping, perhaps, that by honoring his general they could curry favor with the emperor. But that uncharitable construction is denuded of much of its convincing force by the subsequent action of the Prince of Orange. When Holland, in 1813, had been liberated from French domination, and the Prince of Orange, the son of the late stadtholder William V, had returned into his own as King William I of the Netherlands, he sent to the Duke of Reggio the highest military decoration within his grant. The testimonial that accompanied the presentation was couched in the following terms: "The illustrious house of Orange, on re-entering the fatherland, knows how to appreciate your Excellency's moderation. The noble disinterestedness you constantly showed when you possessed unlimited powers inspires in the Dutch people an admiration which is shared by the King. He wishes to present you with a token of his esteem by conferring upon you a decoration on which your brilliant exploits will shed a fresh lustre." Among all Hitler's proud generals there was not one humane, chivalrous soul who deserved the thanks of the people over whom he wielded unlimited power.

The closer one looks at the French and the German picture, the greater the differences appear. The Dutch people's first reaction to the governmental innovations introduced by the French



was to loathe and to thwart them as much as they could. But they gradually came round to admitting that the smoothly running machinery imported from Paris was a vast improvement on the Dutch Republic's complicated mechanism, which was chronically out of order. When after their liberation they were free to discard it, they retained it in its entirety, for they could not deny that under it justice was administered without favoritism or graft, that taxes were evenly imposed and were less of a burden than in former days, and that the police system was severe but impartial. Under Hitler's new order corruption was rampant, justice a ghastly farce, taxation organized loot, the police system terrorism.

That accounts for the leniency with which the public regarded the willing collaboration that erstwhile oligarchs and Orangists alike were ready to offer to King Louis' regime. Even Patriots who had hailed the French Revolution and its gospel of equality, fraternity, and liberty came round to serving a king who loved to surround himself with high dignitaries wearing gallooned and gold-embroidered state attire. The poet Bilderdijk, a loyal Orangist who had chosen to follow his prince into exile rather than swear the oath of allegiance to the new Batavian Republic, returned to Holland in 1806 and accepted from King Louis an appointment as royal librarian and instructor of His Majesty in the Dutch language. There was consistency in his behavior. He was a convinced believer in the blessings of monarchic rule, and abhorred the slogans of the French Revolution. He left his native country when it fell a prey to revolutionaries of the Patriots' party. He returned to it when he saw it changed into a monarchy by Napoleon's order. He would have preferred the Prince of Orange to the emperor's brother, but the person of the monarch was to him but a minor consid-

eration. His paramount interest was in monarchical rule and his love for that form of government made him a devoted servant of the ruler.

Even the new king owed a personal debt to the Napoleonic regime. The monarchy that William inaugurated would not have been accepted so readily by the Dutch people if they had not been inured to one-man rule during the previous decade. King Louis Bonaparte of Holland had paved the way for King William I of the Netherlands. The nation had been forced by Napoleon to accept a king; the Prince of Orange could not have resorted to compulsion. His predecessors, the stadtholders, had been in a position to make themselves monarchs, but knowing the strength of the prejudice against one-man rule among the ruling class, to whom monarch, since Philip II's reign of terror, was synonymous with tyrant, they had refrained from aspiring to the crown. Under King Louis the prejudice had lost its validity, and Prince William could safely claim the sovereignty which, in the days of the Republic, had belonged to the Provincial States. The autonomy of the provinces was a thing of the past; they had been merged into one kingdom with a centralized administration.

The new kingdom covered a much larger territory than the Republic's. The Austrian Netherlands were united with those in the north, and the emperor was indemnified for their loss with extensive territory in northern Italy. King William I thus succeeded to the entire territory that, in the sixteenth century, King Charles V had inherited from his Burgundian ancestors. The breach was healed by which under Philip II the Low Countries were torn apart, and a descendant of the first Prince of Orange who had led the revolt against the king of Spain now wielded royal power over their union. England's fear of France had willed it so. She needed a strong bulwark

on the Continent against any recrudescence of French belligerency, and for that reason the government in London prevailed upon its allies, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, to weld all the Low Countries into the new Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The union lasted only fifteen years. Several causes contributed to its dissolution, but the chief blame for it falls upon the king himself. William I was an eighteenth-century rationalist who combined with a firm belief in himself a profound contempt for the intelligence of his subjects. "The constitution," he once said, speaking off the record, "need not be more than a toy in the hands of the people, so that they enjoy the illusion of freedom, whereas in reality we knead them as circumstances shall require." An enlightened despot, as Joseph II had been, and just as little as he the kind of man to win popularity among subjects who were temperamentally impatient of despotic rule.

His despotism was resented more bitterly by the Belgians. The Hollanders were willing, even glad, to let the king decide and manage. They were tired and lethargic. The precocious milksops that had been fed the sweetish syrup of Van Alphen's verse had grown up into a generation of fainthearted, self-satisfied bourgeois, whose mental lassitude made them malleable subjects for an autocratic king to knead. But the Belgians chafed under his rule. To them he was a foreigner, and that alone was a reason to dislike him. Even his Dutch-speaking subjects in rural Flanders had no use for their Dutch monarch; in fact, they were more bitterly opposed to him than were the Walloons in the industrial parts of Belgium. The Flemish peasantry, arch-conservative and devoutly Roman Catholic, could not be drawn to a king who, in the line of Joseph II's policy, attempted to place their Church under the tutelage of the state.

Support for his regime came chiefly from those sections of the populace which, after toying, in the late eighties, with the

slogans of the French Revolution, had calmed down and become peace-loving, prosperous bourgeois engaged in industry, commerce, and administration. For them there was no reason to be dissatisfied with a ruler who was himself a merchant and promoter of industrial progress and who, as a Protestant, would stem the clerical reaction that threatened to jeopardize their newly won prosperity. The unregenerated radicals, on the other hand, while approving his anti-clerical policy, joined the opposition of the clergy-led Catholic Flemings because they could not stomach his absolutism.

Belgian discontent was but a spasm of the revolutionary tremor that was running throughout the Continent. As the news traveled north, late in July, 1830, of the overthrow in Paris of the legitimate dynasty of the Bourbons, the trouble in Brussels came to a head. Riots spread from the capital to other cities and soon the entire country was ablaze with the fire of revolt.

The powers whose decision at the Congress of Vienna had created the Kingdom of the Netherlands met at a conference in London to consider means of preserving European peace. They recognized the accomplished fact of Belgian liberty, established the frontiers of Belgium as they are at present, and approved the election by the Belgian National Congress of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. A Dutch army, led by the Prince of Orange, invaded Belgium and in a ten-day campaign routed King Leopold's forces. The powers thereupon revised the conditions of separation in favor of Holland; and Belgium, under pressure of the powers, paid the penalty of defeat by accepting them. On November 15, 1831, a treaty was signed in London by her envoy and by the plenipotentiaries of the five powers, Great Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, each of which guaranteed the new kingdom's neutrality and inviolability. King William withheld his signature from the docu-

ment. He felt that his army's military success deserved more generous terms. He finally subscribed to the agreement in 1839.

This London treaty of 1831 is the document that Germany in 1914 treated as "a scrap of paper." It was intended to place the traditional cockpit of Europe outside the potential zone of international conflict and to make it immune to the contagion of war. The contracting parties could not foresee that one in their midst, grown by conquest into an empire, would one day dishonor its pledge to protect the neutrality of Belgium.

The new kingdom of the Belgians, having won its independence from a Dutch ruler who had invaded its country with armed forces, was naturally tempted to reverse that foreign king's detested policies. William had ruled that Dutch should be the official language and the vehicle of instruction in the Dutch-speaking regions of Belgium, and French in the Walloon provinces. The anti-Dutch reaction that set in made that ruling null and void. French would henceforth be the language of administration, jurisdiction, and army, and its use as the sole vehicle of university education at Ghent was prescribed by royal decree in 1849. Thus the Fleming's native speech was excluded from the only school of higher learning existing in Flanders.

That exclusion seriously hampered the development of the Flemish people. It stigmatized their language as an inferior dialect that the educated classes were ashamed to speak, and differences of speech erected a social barrier between the intellectual and lower classes. Few Belgians have given such eloquent expression to their love of Flanders and the Flemish people as Charles de Coster gave in his *Légendes Flamandes* and in his masterpiece *La Légende d'Ulenspiegel et Lamme Goedzak*. His countryman, Stijn Streuvels, who belonged to a

later generation which was no longer hamstrung by unjust discrimination, could not forgive De Coster for writing his Flemish legends in French. "The Flemish people," he wrote, "which has a right to what its sons produce, has been robbed and impoverished by as much as he and other Flemish Belgians have contributed to French literature." De Coster himself must have suffered under the antagonism between his Flemish temperament and its artistic expression forced into hybrid union by an unnational education.

De Coster's Flemish legends were two generations later reproduced by Stijn Streuvels in the bright colors of his picturesque Flemish speech. In Streuvels' version they are indeed so thoroughly Flemish that they seem a reconstruction of a lost original based by an artistic philologist on the extant French translation. And the reader of *Ulenspiegel* who understands both languages will do well to read it in the Dutch rendering; he will enjoy it all the better.

Owlglass is *Ulenspiegel's* English name. But its Low German original is familiar enough to readers of Ben Jonson. Face, that consummate sharper and accomplice of Jonson's *Alchemist*, is introduced to Sir Epicure Mammon under the name of *Ulen-spiegel*. "Jonson," says Herford, "was the most finished adept of all his contemporaries in the irony of dramatic nomenclature, and he has given no better proof of it than in making one of the most cautious and crafty charlatans in literature conceal his identity from his most credulous victim under the name of a world-famous rogue."

A rogue he was, and one of the coarsest that ever lived. Practical jokes were his forte, and simple citizens, tradespeople, and craftsmen were his dupes. He had not that redeeming trait of the medieval robber knight never to chose his victims among the women and the poor. He brutalized unsuspecting landladies,

and had his joke with blind pilgrims and with the helpless sick in hospital.

But the miracle that Subtle the Alchemist could not perform on the base metal of Sir Epicure Mammon, De Coster worked for Ulenspiegel: he turned the mean alloy of his chap-book life to pure gold of fiction. In his story Ulenspiegel is the personification of the folk soul of Flanders. Ever young and immortal, he wanders through the world and never has a fixed abode. He is peasant, nobleman, artist, sculptor, all in one. As such he goes through the fields and along the roadside, praising the good and the beautiful, and laughing and mocking at what is foolish and wrong. Klaas and Soetkin, his parents, are the courage of the toilers of Flanders, his sweetheart Nele is the heart, and Lamme Goedzak, the Sancho Panza of this Flemish Quixote, is the embodiment of the Fleming's appetite and *joie de vivre*. The allegory is no encumbrance to the tale, for the narrative, written in an impassioned style, is vivid with historic realism. This son of Flanders, this Flanders incarnate, is to test his unconquerable spirit in the struggle against tyranny over body and soul, the tyranny of Spanish rule and the Inquisition.

The book is a pageant of the revolt of the Low Countries that was quelled in blood by the Duke of Alva. The contrast between the two clashing nationalities, Spanish and Flemish, is cleverly drawn in the parallel life stories of Philip II, the morose and cruel fanatic, and Ulenspiegel, the freedom-loving wanderer of the fields. The king sends his tax-gatherers and inquisitors to the wealthy Flemings; requisition, extortion, confiscation impoverish the land; the rack and the gallows decimate the people. Klaas, the brave worker of Flanders, is burned at the stake, and Ulenspiegel gathers his father's ashes and carries them in a little bag on his heart.

Ulenpiegel becomes an agent of Prince William of Orange and wanders from town to town in various disguises, sometimes playing the pranks of his former Low Saxon self, but never relinquishing his task: to stir up his people to revolt against the Spaniard. And when the great war begins at sea he joins the fleet of the Sea Beggars. Flanders, less fortunate than her sisters in the north, the Seven United Provinces, is struck down by the oppressor and must bend again under his yoke. But Ulenpiegel, the spirit of Flanders, is not to be vanquished. He is safe in Zeeland, where the Spaniard has lost footing. When one day the village priest and the verger find him fast asleep by the side of the road, with Nele, who fears he is dead, weeping over his body, they bury him and read the prayers of the dead over his grave. But suddenly the fresh-filled grave is shaken and Ulenpiegel, risen from the dead, is heard saying, "Would you bury Ulenpiegel the spirit and Nele the heart of Flanders? No, Flanders will sleep but will never die. Come, Nele." And he goes with her and sings his song, "but no one knows where he will sing his last."

The Flemings, during four centuries, had never been themselves. They had been Frenchmen, Burgundians, Spaniards, Austrians, Hollanders, and in the new kingdom they had helped to create they were second-class Belgians. In the evocation of a more glorious past they found support for their self-respect; but it is strange, indeed, that the romanticist who gave the most beautiful expression to that nostalgia of Flemish nationalism did not write the language of his beloved Flanders.

An older contemporary, who went to school when William I was king, had the courage to write his stories in that despised idiom; yet he was the son of a French immigrant. Hendrik Conscience's father was under-harbor master at Antwerp during the Napoleonic regime, and he remained there after the



French had abandoned the city. Young Hendrik started to write poetry in French, but in 1830, when he was eighteen years old, he confessed, "I find in Flemish something indescribably romantic, mysterious, profound, energetic, even savage. If I ever gain the power to write, I shall throw myself head over ears into Flemish composition." In the following decade he lived up to that promise. In 1838, thirty years before *La Légende d'Ulenspiegel* appeared, he published *De Leeuw van Vlaanderen* (*The Lion of Flanders*), a novel that glorifies his country's medieval past, and he continued to produce, until his death in 1883, historical romances and stories of contemporary Flemish home life that gained him recognition throughout Belgium and abroad and rehabilitation for his native tongue.

Others joined him in writing Flemish. Official contempt for their language spurred them on to vindicate its excellence. They wanted it recognized as an official language of Belgium in the Dutch-speaking parts of the kingdom, and started a campaign with that goal in view which is known by the name of the Flemish Movement. Its character, in the initial stages, was purely literary and artistic, but after the revised Constitution of 1893 had expanded the electorate tenfold, it exerted an ever-increasing influence on politics.

Gradually the ruling class of administrators was forced to concessions. Some of those were dictated by humanitarian considerations. Flemish defendants ignorant of French were examined, tried, and condemned without understanding the charge and the verdict; a law of 1873 made such flagrant miscarriage of justice impossible by ruling that the accused must be tried in the language of his choice. Educational reforms enabled sons of the upper classes to learn Flemish in their frenchified schools, and thus the social cleavage that divided Fleming from Fleming was gradually healed.

During World War I the Germans tried to win the Flemings over to their side by changing the University of Ghent into a Flemish school of higher learning. Mr. Van Cauwelaert, the leader of the Flemish Roman Catholic party and one of three deputies who had proposed a bill for the cession of the University of Ghent to the Flemings, wrote in his weekly paper *Vrij België*, "A Flemish university created under such conditions will remain without professors and without students." But that prophesy did not come true. The German bait proved too alluring for the bitterest Gallophobes among the Flemings. These, who called themselves Activists, made no bones of taking what was offered them instead of trusting to the fulfilment of vague promises from their own government. The treasonable action of this minority meant a temporary setback for the Flemish cause, for the entire movement was blamed for the misdeeds of a few. But the very acerbity of Gallophile censure was a challenge to the majority of loyal Flemings to reassert their rights with renewed vigor. The general elections of November, 1919, increased their strength in the Chamber; in 1920, a law was passed establishing the principle that the Belgian administration must employ the Flemish language in Flemish-speaking land; the fight for their Flemish university was resumed in Parliament; and in December, 1922, a majority of Deputies voted for recognition of the principle that the Flemish-speaking population of Belgium has a right to education in its own language.

In Holland, King William, dispirited by the outcome of the Belgian revolution, abdicated in favor of his son in the year that followed his signing of the Treaty of London. He had ruled a people who seemed hardly worthy of so excellent a king. William had shown tireless industry, a flair for business, a talent for finance, the courage of initiative, all qualities that

were sadly lacking in his subjects. Their apathy almost justified his assumption of arbitrary personal rule. He saw farther ahead than most of his subjects and would not have his reform plans thwarted by their inertia. In 1825 the first railway was built in the British Isles. It was an innovation too daring and fantastic for cautious Hollanders. Besides, the excellence of their trekschuit service dissuaded them from experimenting with a newfangled means of transportation. There were, indeed, a few reckless individuals among them who were anxious to see the nation pay sacrifice to the speed devil. These actually prevailed upon the Government to commission an hydraulic engineer to report on the feasibility of a railway in Holland. His report was pigeonholed, and the cautious drew comfort from the Government's inaction. But King William did not let the matter rest. He appointed a committee that was to devise ways and means for the building of a railroad. Its proposals formed the basis for a Railway Bill which was submitted to the Second Chamber in February, 1838. It found favor with two of the deputies; the other forty-six rejected it.

His Majesty was not impressed by this adverse vote. He ordered by royal decree that an iron railroad was to be built from Amsterdam to Arnhem, with a side line from Utrecht to Rotterdam. The scheme would be financed by the floating of a loan of nine million guilders. The king himself guaranteed the payment of interest from his private means. It took several years before the first train left Amsterdam for Utrecht. Until 1843 the trekschuit and the stagecoach remained the only competitors supplying rapid transit between the two cities.

Meanwhile, however, three enterprising citizens of Amsterdam had obtained a concession for the construction of a railway between Amsterdam and Haarlem. The royal decree conceding the grant was dated June 1, 1836. On September 29,

1839, the line was inaugurated. The first train, consisting of ten coaches and drawn by two engines named *Rapidity* and *Eagle*, transported some three hundred guests of the Holland Iron Railway Company from Amsterdam to Haarlem in thirty-five minutes. *Rapidity* and *Eagle* would have done better still if the former had not come loose and, true to its name, shot ahead of *Eagle* and its tail of ten carriages. The first-class coaches were given the name of *diligence*, second-class consisted of *char-à-bancs*, and *wagons* were for third-class passengers. Only the *diligence* was closed. The company was not allowed to feed coal to *Rapidity* and *Eagle*, lest smoke and soot should cause annoyance to travelers in the open cars. Coke was the regulation fuel, which had the additional advantage of diminishing the fire hazard to houses along the road. The destitute were transported gratuitously, not in one of the coaches but in the freight car. They came in such numbers to enjoy a free ride that the company decided to admit only those who carried a permit from the police commissioner. Travelers were requested by means of an advertisement in the *Amsterdam Courant* to appear at the station not less than fifteen minutes before the time of departure. The ticket collector, in blue-and-yellow uniform, tolled a bell for five minutes to warn prospective passengers still on their way to the station that they were late. Two minutes before the start he rang the bell again in quicker tempo, an ominous signal to the tardy that time was nearly up. He rang the death knell of Dutch placidity and composure.

A good picture of that placid life in the thirties is to be found in the most popular storybook ever published in the Netherlands. The modest make-up of this little volume seemed to deprecate in advance any pretensions to best-sellerdom on the part of author and publisher. The former concealed himself behind the pen name Hildebrand, the latter apparently thought

the poorest kind of paper good enough for the reception of Hildebrand's effusions. The acclaim they elicited from the public and the press was a pleasant surprise to both. Within half a year a second edition was required. A third, containing new material, saw the light eleven years later, and during the latter half of the century reprint followed reprint in rapid succession until, shortly before his death in 1903, the author, then in his eighty-ninth year, corresponded with the same publishing house that brought out the first edition about the correction of proofs for the twenty-second. And in 1939 the book was honored with a fortieth, richly illustrated, on the occasion of its centenary.

The title of this most popular prose book in Dutch literature is *Camera Obscura*. Hildebrand, whose real name was Nicolaas Beets, was the same who had the courage to ridicule the little prigs of Van Alphen's *Short Poems for Children*. Half a year before Hildebrand broke into print Nicolaas Beets had taken his doctor's degree in sacred theology at Leyden. Beets was a celebrity in Holland before Hildebrand became his rival. He was famous under his real name before his twenty-fifth birthday, thanks to translations from Byron and to original poems in the Byronic vein dripping of *Weltschmerz* and despair. The young student paraded a pain that never hurt. It was an effective make-believe that added a romantic touch of mystery to his handsome appearance. Ladies listened to him in raptures when he read his gloomy verse in clubs and literary societies, and older poets of established reputation hailed the young upstart as an equal, if not their master.

But in that same year 1839 in which *Camera Obscura* appeared he openly renounced the Byronic pose. The future minister of the Dutch Reformed Church forswore the pretense of an unfelt misanthropy and revealed his real, fellow-loving self in Hildebrand. He still appeared under the spell of English

literature, but of authors whose genius was truly akin to his own. *Camera Obscura* is imbued with the irony of Sterne, the whimsicality of Lamb, the humor of Dickens. Hildebrand was indebted also to Washington Irving. He had read the *Sketch Book*, and the best description I can give of Hildebrand's volume is to call it a Dutch counterpart of that American classic. There were Dutch humorists before Hildebrand, and it is possible that some of these influences reached him indirectly through the writings of his native forerunners, for all of them were imitators of Sterne. But by whatever channel they came to him, he alone succeeded in giving this borrowed gold and silver nationwide currency by putting a genuinely Dutch stamp upon it. *Camera Obscura* has delighted four successive generations because it has shown them intimate genre pictures in which they have recognized the very essence of their own domestic and social life.

Hildebrand was not a penetrating student of character. He observed his fellow-men's behavior with a keen eye for the comical, the ludicrous, and the incongruous. But why people acted as they did, what hidden impulses made their deeds belie their words, what smouldering passions were concealed under unruffled appearances, those were questions that he never cared to raise or solve. That may account for his incapacity to create a plot. His short stories consist of a series of humorous and wittily told incidents that are connected only by the recurrence in each new scene of the same set of characters, the writer himself being usually one of these.

In *The Stastok Family*, Hildebrand is a visitor in a small provincial town. The opening chapter shows him descending from the stagecoach along with several fellow travelers, whose portraits are sketched with a few humorous touches. He is met by an aged inmate of the parochial almshouse, who during the

day is employed as a servant in the household of Hildebrand's uncle. In a later chapter we see Hildebrand gaining the confidence of old Keesje and eliciting from him a pathetic story in which the heartlessness of official charity is satirized. The description of the visitor's arrival in his uncle's home is a masterpiece of ironic portraiture. The chief butt of his irony is his cousin Pieter, a conceited but awkward youth devoid of all social graces. We get to know him better in the chapter describing a pool game in which Hildebrand and Pieter and a group of noisy habitués of the coffeehouse participate, not the kind of company in which Pieter finds himself at ease. The high light of the story is an account of an evening at home when uncle and aunt Stastok have friends in for tea, a company of kindly, smug, and narrow-minded bourgeois whose conversation, never rising above the level of the tea table, is turned by the author into a piece of highly comic drama. The story concludes with an amusing account of an outing by water on a chilly October afternoon, in which Pieter's conceit, and his helplessness as a social being, again supply the comical note.

Each episode is in its modest genre a little masterpiece, but their sequence does not form a plot. When Hildebrand has said good-bye to the Stastoks and has boarded the stagecoach, life in the town he leaves behind continues its even tenor. Nothing has changed for his having been there. He has caught six scenes in his camera obscura and copied them with artistic skill, arranging, retouching, and coloring them with taste and a sense of proportion.

*The Kegge Family*, a longer and more ambitious story, first printed in the third edition, was sadly spoiled by the author's attempt to inject dramatic intrigue into the final episode. Another tale was wisely left unfinished. Hildebrand was a genre painter, not a storyteller, and he was at his best when he ac-

cepted the limitations of his talent. Hence his art was closely akin to that of the great genre painters of the seventeenth century. He shared their loving observation of the little things and incidents of everyday life and depicted them with the same painstaking accuracy. Only his lighting was different. He illumined his scenes with the sunshine of his humor which, as we saw, was of Anglo-Saxon origin. Thus he created a book that enjoys a greater popularity than *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* has attained in this country. It has stood even the hardest test a book can be subjected to: its popularity has survived its use as a schoolbook.

Hildebrand's models lived a hundred years ago, but their type is not extinct. Only the scene in which they moved and had their being has undergone a change. They traveled by stage-coach or trekschuit, and lived in towns that were self-centered communities without much interest in or contact with the world around. When the book was fifty years old, that little Stastok world had changed so much that the author, then in his seventy-third year, yielded to the popular demand for a commentary to *Camera Obscura*. There were so many allusions to obsolete customs, to articles of clothing that had gone out of fashion, to forgotten celebrities, to antiquated methods of education, to games that had gone out of vogue, to crafts and professions that had lost their usefulness, that the third generation decorated the margins of the latest editions with fringes of question marks. The flood of letters asking Hildebrand for enlightenment assumed in the course of the years the size of an avalanche. So when the book approached its semi-centennial, its begetter sat down to explain its obscurities to the generation of his grandchildren. And during the next half century the tempo of change gained ever faster speed. The generation that was born in the eighties when Hildebrand's commentary to



*Camera Obscura* appeared has seen their country and the world around it pass through an evolution that has profoundly altered the life of the individual and the general aspect of society. The Dutch now living are farther estranged from their grandparents' age than these were from the age of the Stastoks.

A hundred years ago the towns of the Low Countries were still fortresses. But changes in tactics and techniques of war had proved them outmoded. The upkeep of fortifications became a useless expense, and gradually one town after another was dismantled and the ramparts transformed into parks. Trees were planted where the cannon had stood, the walls were demolished, and lawns and flower beds were laid out on slopes along the edge of the old moat. The Dutch name for the moat is *singel*, which means belt, and there is hardly any Dutch town that has not its *singel* and pleasant promenades along either side. Since the transformation took place nearly all these towns have expanded, in some cases to many times their former size. More homes had to be built to house more people, and there was room for these only outside the old ramparts. Thus the *singel*, once the belt that encircled the town, became itself enclosed by the town. But everywhere it retained its old name, and a walk through the parks along the *singel* describes a circuit around the original town, the old fortress within its moat. In Leyden one can still follow the full circular course of the *singel* and check up on the time it must have taken the burgomaster during the Spanish siege of 1574 to make the round of the walls.

The town, dismantled, lay open to the outer world. That had its effect upon the general outlook of the inhabitants. Their localism, beset with narrow prides and prejudices, lost its sharp edges. Their horizon widened and took in the province and at long last the whole country. That was progress indeed, a progress from burgherdom to citizenship. It had its drawbacks

too. The peculiar charm of the Low Countries is in the individualism of their towns and cities, each having a distinct character all its own. Those distinctions tend to fade when towns begin to grow toward each other both in space and in spirit.

New means and methods of transportation accelerated the tempo of this development. They accelerated also the tempo of the Hollanders' daily life. Before the advent of the railway they had time to spare. Steam and electricity supplied them with means to save more of it, but they learned that with the increase of time-saving devices time became rarer and rarer. Time saved encouraged the hoarders to crowd the rescued hours with fresh activities, which, consuming the savings, urged them on to invent ever new devices for saving time. The steamboat superseded the trekschuit, the horse-drawn tram sped the pedestrian who was in a hurry, the trolley car made the horse tram outmoded, the bicycle almost cleared the streets of walkers. In the towns of present-day Holland and Belgium you see more people on wheels than on foot. The Dutch, once aroused from their lethargy, were not slow in adopting these innovations. Once the bicycle had made them speed-conscious, they became speed-eager and took to flying with a vengeance. It is a far cry from the daily runs of the trekschuit in the Holland of the Stastoks to the daily flights of the KLM (the Royal Aviation Company) across continents and oceans. Yet the Stastoks lived only a century ago.

The general health of the nation, both physical and mental, has vastly improved during the past century. Dr. C. C. J. Nieuwenhuys, an Amsterdam physician who held advanced ideas about hygiene, published in 1816 a *Medical Topography* of his city, a sociological survey of early nineteenth-century Amsterdam, which presents a depressing picture of living con-

ditions at that period. There were public baths in those days, but, he complained, they attracted few bathers. Private baths were rare, and rarer still the use of them. Jacob Cats, the seventeenth-century didacticist, had taught his readers that the preservation of their health required one bath a month; his countrymen, two hundred years later, still abided, apparently, by his prescription. "Every physician knows," wrote Nieuwenhuys, "that sea bathing has been a source of health in England for quite some time and is beginning to prove its value in parts of Germany and East Friesland; but nowhere along our sea-coasts is opportunity offered for that healthy sport." The Dutch were a nation who kept their streets and houses cleaner than their bodies.

Body odor was probably so prevalent that it was not noticed or felt to be a nuisance. The men wasted their health, said Nieuwenhuys, in sweaty clothes. They wore two layers of underwear and wound on top of these several yards of bunting around their bellies. Tights impeded the circulation of the blood and the play of the muscles. Women who belonged to the upper class and followed foreign fashions did the very reverse: they shivered their health away. Copying French and Italian fashion plates, they exposed their breasts to the inclement Dutch weather, and in their homes, unless their men folk were in, they managed for economy's sake without a fire, even in the bitterest cold, being satisfied with a small foot warmer. Most people slept in stuffy wall closets that were hard to air; the rest, and those the well-to-do, in four-posters no less stuffy on account of the heavy curtains that enclosed them. They were addicted to eating much at each meal but also many meals a day, breakfast being repeated at eleven, and tea or coffee being served at any hour.

A narrow worship of everything Dutch was the besetting sin

of all classes of society. It was a reaction to the exploded boast of eighteenth-century rationalism that man could mold his own future. It was now the fashion to believe in a mystical folk mind which, unaided by man's conscious effort, guided the evolution of the nation, a naïve trust that was akin to the Liberals' doctrine of laissez faire, the non-interference with the free play of social forces. A fear lest foreign influences should hinder the traits that were the nation's very own from developing organically made for a self-centered community absurdly proud of its Dutchness. It deflected the people's attention from the international present to the national past, it stimulated — and there was merit in this — historical research, the study of folklore, of medieval literature, of the language in the successive stages of its growth. The learning of the professional historians reached the public at large through the novels of the romanticists, and these in turn inspired the painters to recreate the past in visible shape. Thus scholarship, literature, and art conspired to contract the people's mental horizon and turn them into self-satisfied nationalists. It made Dutch workers disinclined to heed the call for enlistment in an international labor movement. In 1871 a section of Dutch labor founded the *Algemeen Nederlandsch Werkliedenverbond* (General Netherlands Workers Union) with the outspoken intention of opposing the first Internationale. Its leader refused to cooperate even with the workers of Belgium!

The nation's snaillike withdrawal into its shell was duplicated by family life. The Dutch, after the Napoleonic era, escaped from an inclement world to the safety of the domestic hearth. The women were the victims of this domestication. They enjoyed far less freedom than Dutch women had been granted in previous centuries. The only outside activity that was considered proper for them was slumming, and those who cared not for the dispensing of charity were the hopeless prisoners of boredom. With

all their attention centered upon the home, they found distraction in "decorating" it with useless trumpery and gimcracks. Marriage was the sole career that was open to girls and the hunt for a husband their only sport.

The literature of the period reflects in its tameness this ingrown bourgeois society. The poets, most of whom were ministers of the Church, celebrated in pedestrian verse the sweet blessings of the hearth and the greatness of Holland's past. They gloried in laurels won by heroic forebears, but were content at the same time to praise a petty bourgeois present that was incapable of heroism.

Town houses were high and dark. The women cared more for unfaded wallpapers and hangings than for the cheer of sunlight in their rooms. Those old houses had a melancholy charm. The merchants who built them in the eighteenth century used them for living quarters, business office, and warehouse. They stored their stock-in-trade in the attics, two stories of them. Each house was supplied with a pulley for hoisting up the stores. In the late nineteenth century the attics were no longer used for storage. By that time the merchant's compact existence had disintegrated. He had his office and warehouse elsewhere, in a part of the town given over to business, and the canals had become a quiet and dignified residential section. Now, fifty years later, few people care to live there any more. The stately patrician mansions have been invaded by business offices, and the grandchildren of their former owners have moved into modern and more comfortable country houses. Office and home, once together under one roof, are now miles apart, and children grow up in the country in total ignorance of what their father is doing during the day.

The small tradesman lived over, or at the back of, his store. His limited income did not allow him the luxury of a house, however simple, in the country, nor could he afford to travel in

the holiday season. A short trip up the Rhine was perhaps the one unforgettable event of a lifetime. The middle class was a class of stay-at-homes. Their immobility kept them conservative, and their conservatism made them the mainstay of Calvinist orthodoxy. The capitalist class and the class of professional men, unsettled by travel and university studies, began to drift away from the Church and found satisfaction, if no comfort, in a barren agnosticism. From them the Liberal party recruited its followers. It was a cautious liberalism that they confessed, subject to fits of uneasiness and alarm at hearing the slogans of socialism mentioned.

The rise of the Liberals to power occurred in the late forties. They were the political heirs of the eighteenth-century Patriots; and that they proved strong enough to turn their criticism of King William II (1840-49) and his autocratic rule into constructive action showed that their discontent was shared by at least that section of the nation constituting the electorate. The people were getting restive under the king's autocratic rule. Bourgeois complaisance became capable also of self-criticism. E. J. Potgieter's book reviews in *De Gids* (*The Guide*), the monthly which he founded and edited, and those of his fellow editor C. Busken Huet, castigated the mediocrity of contemporary literature. Eduard Douwes Dekker, writing under the pen name Multatuli, satirized in his novel *Max Havelaar* (1860) the smug, unimaginative middle class. The book was at the same time a scathing indictment of Dutch administration in the East Indies, where the poor native slaved for the enrichment of Amsterdam coffee merchants. That it was well received and widely read was a sign of increasing open-mindedness and wholesome dissatisfaction with existing conditions, and it was the Liberal party that brought the needed reforms, in spite of the orthodox Calvinists, who, traditionally pro-Orange, sup-

ported King William III (1849-90) in resisting the Liberals' progressivism. The conservatives called themselves the Anti-revolutionary party, proclaiming thereby that they were opposed to the rationalism of the eighteenth century that had produced the French Revolution as well as to contemporary liberalism in which they saw a modern offshoot of that damnable creed.

The evolution of modern Holland is largely due to the reforms introduced by the Liberals. They curtailed the royal power and made the king's ministers responsible to Parliament for his acts. Thorbecke, their eminent leader, realized the imperfection of a suffrage based on property. "Capital attracts capital," he wrote in 1844; "where it is, more wants to be. There is nothing but irony in legislation that offers citizenship to all under conditions that are accessible only to few. For wealth increases on one side and poverty on the other; the rich get ever richer, the poor ever poorer." Hence the introduction of universal suffrage was a matter of simple justice. The conservatives, however, did not see it that way. They reasoned that they who were too poor to pay taxes should have no part in the government, which held the nation's purse strings. On the strength of that principle they selfishly fought all proposals for the extension of the right to vote. But the principle of universal suffrage lay in the line of the historical development of the age. The most stubborn reaction could not stem it; Holland obtained it in 1917, Belgium a year later.

As the right to vote was gradually extended to an ever-larger electorate, long-submerged levels of the nation rose to the political surface, until in the reign of Queen Wilhelmina (1898-1948) all classes of society entered into competition with each other. Rank, wealth, and privilege no longer secured preferment, but mental alertness, intelligence, and industry did. The knowledge that the way was wide open to success acted as a spur to effort

and ambition. Commerce and industry revived, and in their wake prosperity spread in ever-widening circles. The Dutch East Indies, which King William I had managed as if they were his private concern, were thrown open to private capital and enterprise and offered to the young an outlet for their energy and love of adventure.

After the Franco-Prussian War the industrialization of the German hinterland gave a boost to the transit trade of Rotterdam and Antwerp and added a fresh source of wealth to the assets of both countries. And Belgium was enriched by the acquisition of a vast colonial territory in central Africa, the gift of her unpopular King Leopold II. As the number of homes where prosperity entered increased, the census showed an alarming increase in population, alarming in view of the limited size of both countries. Holland began to create new soil for its growing surplus by turning large parts of the Zuider Zee into arable lands; but the polders thus gained did not relieve the pressure. By the time the reclamation project has been completed the nation will need an outlet for a surplus many times the size of that which it can accommodate. Emigration is the only solution that can ease this perplexing and apparently insoluble problem.

The Dutch have left their native land for other regions in the past, but the causes that prompted their departure were not the same. The town of Holland, Michigan, celebrated the centennial of its founding in 1947. The settlers were orthodox Calvinists who had seceded from the Dutch Reformed Church of the Netherlands because it had swerved, they charged, from the true doctrine of Calvin. They were forbidden, in the reign of King William I, to hold conventicles and were thrown into prison if they were found disregarding the ban on their meetings. They hoped to find in America unshackled freedom for their religious observances. By the time they left Holland, however, that free-



dom was already theirs. Under the reign of King William II (1840-49) all persecution ceased. Yet the urge to emigrate persisted and gained additional force from the prevailing economic need. A potato blight destroyed the food that was the rural population's principal means of subsistence. Hunger and poverty added a persuasive argument to the longing for change that their sufferings for religion's sake had aroused. And so in the late forties the trek to the New World began that was to settle a new Holland in the Middle West of the United States of America.

The newcomers intended to remain Dutchmen. That was clear from the name they gave to their settlement. It was not by way of a sentimental farewell to the native land that they called it Holland. They proclaimed by that choice that they meant to perpetuate the old country in the new, not only their Dutch church, but also their Dutch language, their Dutch schools, and their Dutch way of living. For a long time the Dutch of Michigan stuck to that purpose of the founders. Still, each succeeding generation, in spite of the native tenacity, gave way more and more to the leveling forces of the American environment. A visitor arriving fresh from Holland will not feel at home among its domestic architecture, and though he can still speak his own language there and be understood, Holland has ceased to be a Dutch enclave within the territory of the United States. It is to all intents and purposes an American township.

A resident once told me that a few decades ago the children of Dutch-American homes in Holland were actually ashamed of their origin. They felt insulted when you called them Dutch. That is different now. It is now considered a distinction to be of Dutch ancestry. I suppose that this change of feeling is due to the total Americanization of the Dutch community. As long as the people of Holland were still part aliens, their children, anxious as all children are to conform, were looked upon to their

chagrin as outsiders by their American classmates. But now that even the grownups behave as Americans and the whole town is proud of its Americanism, no stigma attaches any longer to a citizen's Dutchness. On the contrary, it is now deemed an honor to be related to one of the early founders, and the entire community, regardless of erstwhile nationality, takes pride in the town's Dutch origin.

Group migrations from the Netherlands such as Van Raalte's Holland colony inaugurated are possible only when the group is held together by the cement of a common faith. There are Roman Catholic and Calvinist settlements of Dutch immigrants in other parts of the United States, but I have never heard of any that were founded by Dutch agnostics. These prefer to come alone and would not choose to settle in Holland, Michigan. Its Dutch origin would have no attraction for them. Dutchmen abroad feel a common bond in the faith that they share, they find no means of cohesion in their common Dutchness.

Recent immigrants to France gave a striking illustration of this binding force in religious faith. The French government is encouraging immigration of Dutch farmers but does not want group settlements that would plant alien colonies among the native population. It offers, therefore, attractive inducements to those newcomers from Holland who are not averse to being absorbed in the French community. But a number of orthodox Calvinist farmers insisted on settling on French soil as a group and were content to accept land of inferior quality in return for the government's permission to stay together. Unyielding land is a continuous headache for a farmer, yet these men chose the headache they could suffer together rather than the economic well-being that was to be enjoyed alone.

They were asked why they did not go to America or Canada, and all of them answered that France was preferable because it

was nearer home. They wanted to keep in personal touch with their relatives and friends by flying back once in a while to the old nest. For most of the first settlers in Michigan that pleasant prospect was cut off for good. They took leave forever from all they cherished to begin a life of hardship in an unknown wilderness. Emigration in those days was not a concern of the government. The authorities at The Hague assumed no responsibility for the future lot of the quitters. If they wanted to forsake their country, they had to pay the penalty of the venture. The Dutch public took much the same attitude; it was either indifferent or critical. E. J. Potgieter, the editor of *De Gids*, the leading monthly in those days, deplored Van Raalte's decision to take his flock to America. Holland, according to him, was able to secure employment to all her workers; the economic crisis was not symptomatic of the nation's general state of health. If there were citizens, nevertheless, who wanted to seek a livelihood elsewhere, they should emigrate to the East Indies and give the Dutch colonies the benefit of their energy. Emigration to America meant a costly loss to the fatherland and was, consequently, unpatriotic. The government, therefore, was, in Potgieter's opinion, fully justified in washing its hands of these disloyal subjects.

The official attitude toward emigration nowadays is the very reverse of that in Potgieter's time. Now would-be quitters are patted on the back and are told that they do the country a service by leaving. Loyalties are relative values. In a land that suffers from overpopulation, the worker who turns his back to it deserves well of the fatherland. Emigration under those conditions becomes an act of patriotism, and the government speeds the patriots on their way with its grateful blessings. And not with blessings only. It cares for them in their land of exile and sees to it that none comes to grief. The men who volunteered for France received all the help and instruction they needed to

make their venture a success. The Dutch government rented Méridon Castle, in the valley of the Chevreuse, and turned it into a clearinghouse for immigrant farm boys from Holland. Here they found a provisional home where in attractive surroundings they could overcome their initial nostalgia and could learn what they needed to know for the new life awaiting them.

Van Raalte's Holland in Michigan was a different kind of training school. The Dutch government, a century ago, never thought of sending agricultural experts ahead to instruct his followers on the spot in the ways of American husbandry. They had to rely exclusively on the experience they had acquired at home and on their common sense. When these did not suffice, they learned in the hard school of adversity. That proved a more expensive way of training than the schooling at Méridon, for adversity's lessons were paid for with the lives of many of the students. But those who survived were steeled by the ordeal and bred a sturdy race of self-reliant Americans. Their modern descendants would have less reason to be proud of the founders if Van Raalte's enterprise had been a case of *de luxe* immigration "à la Méridon Castle."

This is the inescapable trend of modern life: individual endeavor must give way to government interference and planning. A century ago Haarlem Lake, south of the city that gave it its name, was reclaimed and opened up to settlers. Anyone was welcome, no questions were asked, no proof of skill required, no record looked into. The results were disastrous. Many settlers wasted away through worry, undernourishment, and disease. The mortality rose to an alarming height, and the disheartened fled the scene of their defeat, impoverished and broken in health. Only the hardiest and the most skilled remained to fight it out with nature, and these bred a race steeled by the struggle and made self-confident by the victory. In the new polders that are

being wrested from the Zuider Zee little is being left to chance. The colonists are not allowed to drift in, but are selected with due regard to professional skill, physical stamina, moral fiber, and past record. Even the land is in a way prepared for the farmers. Experiments with various crops conducted by government experts will spare the settlers costly disappointments and give them guidance in the profitable use of the soil.

The liberal doctrine that the state must abstain from interfering in the lives of the people was based on a romantic trust in the self-healing power inherent in the social organism. They saw in the evolution of society a natural process by which out of the seeds of corruption the fruits of regeneration were brought forth. But the Liberals themselves gradually lost faith in automatic resurrection. The crass realities of modern life brought accumulating proof that external interference was a necessary evil for the prevention or suppression of evils that were infinitely worse.

During the reign of Queen Wilhelmina Liberals and Clericals vied with each other in passing welfare legislation that made the state a guardian of the poor, the sick, the unemployed, the disabled, and the aged. Public utilities in Holland are not private enterprises but are owned and run by the central or a local government; not only the postal but also the telegraph and telephone services are state-owned, the railroads are operated by the state, as well as the coal mines in Limburg. Owners of private art collections such as the eighteenth century knew are rare exceptions nowadays; most museums and galleries are owned and administered by the central or a local government. The cost of primary education is defrayed from the public revenue, no matter whether it be given in private or in public schools, and subsidies are granted to private institutions for secondary and higher education that conform to the standards set up by the government.

In short, the state has assumed the functions of dispenser of charities, writer of insurance, purveyor of water, gas, and electricity, telegraph and telephone and wireless operator, owner and administrator of institutions of public benefit, carrier of passengers and freight, school inspector and educator, and subsidizer of various private enterprises beneficial to the public at large. As a result of this development, the government has lost its predominantly political character and become a technical and administrative agency. Bureaucracy flourishes under this new dispensation and the governmental apparatus with its army of experts, inspectors, secretaries, typists, messengers, functions like a self-perpetuating mechanism, which makes its influence felt in diverse ways in every home in the land. The prestige of Parliament has dwindled accordingly, the bureaucrats having seemingly greater power than the people's chosen representatives. The latter, it is true, still are the lawmakers and hold the purse strings, but their debates are no longer of immediate concern to the average citizen who realizes that his manner of life takes shape and color from the decisions of the various government bureaus.

The differences between the political parties have faded since all must yield to the irresistible trend of the age toward state interference. The increasing extension of state management brings grist to the socialist mill but proves at the same time to the laboring class that Karl Marx's prophesy of increasing pauperization of the proletariat is a delusion. Proletarians in ancient Rome were the paupers who did not contribute anything to the state except offspring (*proles*). Proletarians in that sense of the word do not exist in the Low Countries any more. The workman is the recipient of a decent wage and able to pay taxes as any other citizen. Slums have disappeared and have been replaced by communal low-rent dwellings that are sanitary and architecturally beautiful.

Republicanism, as a consequence, is a dead issue in the Netherlands, except among a small band of Communists. The Socialists have ceased to be opponents of the monarchy. Their great leader, P. J. Troelstra, made an abortive attempt in 1918 to start a revolution. Carried away by the unexpected victory of his German comrades Ebert and Scheidemann, he called upon Dutch labor to seize power. It was the great blunder of his life. His own adjutants disavowed him, and the rank and file of the party sided with them. In its initial phase, in the eighties of the previous century, the party's aims had been revolutionary. But during Queen Wilhelmina's reign it changed its tactics and became a reform party. The Dutch workers had begun to share in the general prosperity. Since the Indies had been opened to free enterprise, the returns from the colonies increased by leaps and bounds; Dutch industries benefited by the growing demand in Java for all sorts of manufactures, especially textiles; and Dutch shipping did a booming trade carrying freight to and fro between the colonies and the motherland. The workers' lot improved as the general level of well-being rose. Political cooperation with the bourgeois parties was no longer scorned as a betrayal of labor's interests. They might still talk about the chains in which they were held by capitalism, but they preferred the chains of their oratory to the doubtful blessings of a Marxian revolution.

Though party differences had faded, the parties themselves had not been blotted out. While they lost distinctness, they grew in number. The Dutch are stubborn individualists, but their admirable insistence on the right to think for themselves often leads them astray. It resulted in the political field in an unwieldy multiplicity of parties. Even the Dutch National Socialists — for they did exist in Holland — could not agree among themselves and split up into rival factions. In that respect they conformed to the nation's tendency toward disintegration, though

they were bent on inhibiting most other national tendencies. The Dutchman's mind works analytically. He sees the little things that divide and misses the fundamental concepts on which people might agree. Sectarianism is a characteristic feature of life in Holland as it was in the seventeenth century. There is nothing wrong in that if it goes along with the tolerance that admits the possibility of other people's forms of worship being equally beautiful and pleasing to God. But that was seldom the case. Each denomination believed itself to possess the monopoly of truth, as if truth were ever attainable to mortal man.

This spirit of self-righteousness caused a cleavage also in the social life of the people. Catholics were not allowed by their clergy to mix on social terms with Protestants, lest mixed marriages should increase in number; and a similar ban kept Calvinists from consorting with their agnostic fellow citizens. Mixed tennis clubs of Protestants and Catholics were proscribed by the priests, and for two members of the rival religions to be dancing partners was in the eyes of the clergy an abomination. Thus the shepherds whose task it was to teach the love of one's fellow man in the spirit of Christ taught their flocks to avoid one another and worked systematically for the people's disintegration.

There was the same schism in the sphere of education. The neutral public school, in which the children of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews were brought together and taught to tolerate each other, was never popular in Holland except among Liberals and Socialists. The majority of the nation insisted on instruction for their children in the religious spirit of their home. The Calvinists had their own Calvinist schools, the Catholics their own parish schools. In the name of the Christian religion the little ones were segregated into different camps and imbued not with love but with suspicion of their comrades. Thus the



Hollander's individualism showed all too glaringly the defects of its qualities. It had a corroding effect upon national unity. The nation had become a jigsaw puzzle of factions and groups and parties and sects and denominations, each bent on vindicating its right of existence rather than on vindicating the strength of the nation as a whole.

## CHAPTER XII

### EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN

WITH THE Flemish demands fully satisfied and the grievances of labor in a fair way of being redressed, the Low Countries, in spite of religious sectarianism, were enjoying a period of internal peace when Hitler's hordes swooped down upon them. For Belgium this was the second time within a quarter of a century. The Germans in World War I (1914-18) had experienced what stubborn resistance a small, weak nation can offer to superior strength and tyranny. But the lesson had been lost on them. The Prussian system, which forces the individual to blind obedience instead of educating him to a sense of responsibility for his actions, makes the Prussian mind incapable of understanding the spirit of people to whom obedience is a self-imposed duty. Character under that system becomes a crime and submission to injustice a virtue. A striking instance, in World War I, of this Prussian failure to recognize and honor the moral courage of disobedience was seen in the abduction of two famous Belgian professors of the University of Ghent to a prison camp in Germany. One was Henri Pirenne, the great historian of Belgium, the other Paul Frédéricq, an authority on the history of the Inquisition in the Netherlands. They were punished for refusing to help in the flamification of their university under German auspices. Their fate brought into stronger relief the brave attitude of Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Mechelen. In an outspoken Lenten sermon of the year 1916 he

exhorted his flock to trust to the ultimate victory of right over force and preached to them the virtue of patriotism:

"Together with our king and government you have agreed to this immense sacrifice to the fatherland. In obedience to our pledged word, in recognition of the moral truth that justice passes force, you have sacrificed your possessions, your homes, your sons, your husbands, and, after eighteen months of suppression, you remain as proud of your deed as you were on the very first day. And all over the world your self-abnegation is understood and admired. You are well aware that I have never concealed my anxiety from you. I have preached to you the love of the fatherland, because it is knit up with the chief virtue of Christianity: the love of one's neighbors. Still, from the very beginning I have made you feel that I foresaw a long time of trial. But the natural and supernatural conviction that the ultimate victory will be ours is anchored in my soul deeper than ever."

In that same year the Germans began to deport Belgian workers for compulsory labor in Germany, in flagrant violation of international law and in spite of official promises that nothing of the kind was contemplated. One hundred and twenty thousand men were taken from their homes and sent into slavery. And those who remained behind, without the men who should provide for them, were reduced to starvation by the Germans' systematic plundering and looting. They had no weapons with which to retaliate except mockery and ridicule. Every morning the German governor, General Von Bissing, found on his desk a copy of *La Libre Belgique*, an underground paper in which the oppressor was satirized with caricatures and verbal sarcasm. And meanwhile the Belgian army stood guard on the Yser and never budged until, late in August, 1918, the initiative passed to the Allies. A month later, they launched the attack that was to liberate the country.

Holland, though uninvaded, did not remain unscathed. She was between the devil and the deep sea. The Allies seized her ships and the Germans sank them. Both sides laid mines and caused the loss of many ships and the lives of many Dutch fishermen and sailors. The Netherlands government closed the Scheldt for ships of war of every nationality and thus incurred the wrath of Belgians and Britons, as the latter were thereby prevented from ascending the river for the relief of Antwerp; but afterwards it vexed the Germans, whom the closure hindered from turning Antwerp into a naval base against England. Holland's food and coal supplies dwindled and had to be rationed out equally to rich and poor by a Food Dictator at fixed prices. But the people of Holland were spared the trials of a German occupation and were fortunate in being able to offer hospitality to hundreds of thousands of Belgians who had fled across the border after Antwerp had fallen into German hands.

The occupation during World War II was for the Belgians a repetition of that recent experience. They were placed under military authority, and the army command, though cruel and ruthless, was a lenient taskmaster compared to the Gestapo that was given authority over the Dutch in Holland. Adolf Hitler proclaimed after the surrender of the Dutch army on the fifth day of the invasion that the Netherlands had been reunited with the Reich in that great New Order that was to last a thousand years. One feels inclined to laugh at the discrepancy between the millennium of his boast and the half decade of his performance. But for the Dutch and the other European nations that were enslaved by Hitler's henchmen their bondage was not a short interruption of their independent nationhood. Every hour of those five years seemed to them endless torture, and their deliverance a rescue from the eternal terrors of hell into the bright sunshine of heaven. When daily life is lived in constant anticipa-

tion of something dreadful to happen, the minutes creep by at a snail's pace. Suspense is a mocking mirror in which the moment looks grotesquely swollen. It disfigures every thought that it reflects. Three months after the invasion a friend of mine wrote me from Leyden that a hundred years had passed since the tenth of May. People aged quickly in those years that were centuries. The young became middle-aged under the impact of hard, incredibly cruel experience, and children were grown up before they had known youth.

Fear was the women's daily bread, fear lest their husbands and sons be arrested and executed as hostages or sent to concentration camps or deported to Germany for slave labor. The thud of a hobnailed boot in front of the house, a hard knock on the door, the screech of an auto siren outside might mean the coming of the Gestapo. Fear also of sickness due to the lack of proper and sufficient food, of clothing, of cover at night, for the Nazis made a regular business of requisitioning wearing apparel and blankets. At The Hague, during the final months of the occupation, a quarter of all the children went barefoot, and the others wore little wooden boards that were fastened to their feet with strings. All wore torn rags and many had no underclothing. In rural areas the people fared better than in the cities. The peasantry living in isolation never lost the art of helping themselves. The townspeople, spoiled by all the comforts and mechanical gadgets that make modern life pleasant, were helpless without them.

But they were helpless only for a time. When German ruthlessness and greed had looted the country with systematic thoroughness and life had been stripped of all amenities and comforts, the people learned to manage with the bare essentials. In that way they found a new freedom. Necessity is the mother of invention, and inventing is creating, and creating is a source of

inner satisfaction. It gives the maker a proud sense of self-sufficiency and independence. It makes him free. The Germans never got so much pleasure from the wealth they had looted as did the Dutch out of the various devices by which they made up for the loss. Their free press was taken from them, and the Nazis thought that without it the people of Holland could easily be turned into dupes of Goebbels' propaganda. But soon in all parts of the country surreptitiously printed papers took over the task of the muzzled press. Those were read more eagerly than the established dailies had been read in the days when the printed word was still free. They were written with greater force and eloquence because the writers wrote from deep conviction, in passionate earnestness. They wrote from a necessity of saying what they said, not from a necessity of filling the columns of their papers. The knowledge that they wrote at the risk of their lives made their work all the more precious. The sense of potential martyrdom ennobled their underground labors to the dignity of sacrifice.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. The peoples of Europe bore abundant testimony to the truth of those words during the five years of their affliction. They did not lose faith in a providence that could so mercilessly try them. An oriental story tells of a village priest who asked his neighbor for the loan of a large copper kettle. He returned it a few days later, together with a tiny kettle, a miniature replica of the one he had borrowed. "What about this?" asked the neighbor. "That is yours too; while your kettle was in my house it gave birth to a baby." The other accepted it with thanks. Some weeks later the priest borrowed the kettle again, but this time failed to return it. The neighbor went to claim it. "I am sorry," said the priest, "while your kettle was here it got sick and died." The neighbor flew into a rage, but the priest said, "If you are

willing to believe that a kettle can give birth to a little one, you must also believe that it can die."

Thus it is with our belief in God. I have heard people say, "I cannot believe in a God who can will such horrors," or "I cannot reconcile my conception of a just and merciful deity with this orgy of cruelty and injustice." But it is a worthless faith that is willing, in days of peace and prosperity, to thank providence for its blessings but refuses to believe in God's mercy before the spectacle of such misery as the Germans spread over Europe. That was not the prevailing mood in the Low Countries. There was no rebellion against the teachings of the churches. On the contrary, the churches were sought by ever-increasing multitudes for the consolation they gave to the afflicted and the mourning. The people, in all humility, accepted the misery of their suffering as an ordeal divinely willed.

Bismarck used to say that Holland would annex herself to Germany. He was a wiser statesman than Hitler. German music, German science, German poetry were popular in Holland before World War II. Dutch scholars studied at German universities and brought not only German methods of teaching back to their classrooms but the very jargon in which the pundits of Berlin and Heidelberg and Bonn used to expound their learning. The style of many a Dutch scientist was double Dutch — part Dutch, part German. Dutch journalists were equally guilty of making a bastard of their mother tongue. And from the schoolbooks and the daily press this mongrel Dutch crept into the speech of the educated. Not of the man in the street. He is the stalwart guardian of pure, racy Dutch. But modern school education is so general in Holland that the untutored custodian of the mother tongue was fast becoming a rare specimen.

Bismarck was right: the Dutch were slowly but surely annexing themselves to Germany. Hitler put a stop to that process.

The ruins of Rotterdam and many another city, the remnants of her decimated Jewish people, the memory of the tens of thousands executed, tortured, and starved to death are a lasting warning against annexation.

The Nazis did irreparable harm to the international prestige of German learning. By forcing scholars to adapt their teaching to Nazi ideology they brought German universities into discredit. After World War I, which severed the ties that united men of science all over the world, Dutch scholars did their best to heal the breach. One of them, Dr. Ernest Cohen, professor of chemistry at Utrecht, invited a group of his colleagues from the former belligerent countries that were then trying to restore peace among themselves. He was in a quandary over which language he should propose as a vehicle of discussion in the multilingual gathering. But he was spared the invidious task of making a choice. Just when he was ready to start the proceedings he was called out of the room for a telephone call. The speaker at the other end of the line was somewhat long-winded, and when Cohen re-entered his study he found his guests in animated conversation. And to his surprise the language they had chosen to converse in was German. "That made me hopeful," he said, "that the restoration of peace would prove less difficult than I feared it would be."

He lived to see the shattering of his hope in May, 1940. He lived to see his Jewish colleagues expelled from the universities of Holland, including himself. I never thought of Cohen as a Jew. He was a Hollander and a great scholar, and it never occurred to any Dutchman to speak contemptuously of his brilliant research as "Jewish chemistry." Holland has been enriched intellectually by the wisdom of her Jewish scholars, and the stifling of their voices was an act of barbarous injustice not only against the Jewish race but also against the Dutch nation whose honored



sons they were. Bold and eloquent protests were raised against the Nazis' persecution of Jewish scholars. When Dr. E. M. Meyers, the most brilliant member of the law school at Leyden, was barred from the classroom, his colleague Cleveringa took his place and addressed the faculty and students in brave, defiant words, which cost him his freedom, and many others suffered or died in prisons and concentration camps for fearlessly speaking out in the face of ignorant brutality. The Nazis thought that they could prevent such rebellions by threatening to close the university, but the students would rather see their Alma Mater gagged than have her teach Nazi doctrines. And so the universities of Leyden and Delft were closed and remained closed all through the war.

That did not mean, though, that Holland's cultural life did not receive nourishment. The study of philosophy, history, and literature was never so popular as it was under German occupation. Movie palaces, theatres, and lecture rooms lost their attractions. The people would not finance with their hard-earned savings the Nazi propaganda that was screamed from screen, stage, and platform. They preferred to spend their evenings with ten or a dozen friends discussing the books they had read or reading books together. Thinkers among the nation were busy writing, and popular publications on scientific problems were among the best sellers. The entire country was a huge prison camp and the long, endless days they spent there were trying men's souls. But while the jailers were training their own youth in the barbaric arts of warfare, plunder, and massacre, their prisoners were training theirs in the arts that make for intellectual freedom. The slave drivers were being enslaved by their godless lust for conquest and power, the slaves, being subject to no passions except the passion for freedom, were finding it beyond their prison bars in the realm of the spirit.

The Nazis never succeeded in breaking down that spirit. Both the Dutch and the Belgian armies had surrendered, but the people's passive resistance held out. The weak have many subtle ways of fighting. The cold stare, the stony silence, the pretended stupidity, the faint smile, the clearing of the throat, the cough-like chuckle, all those little offenses that the offended cannot punish without making themselves ridiculous are sharp pin-pricks to which especially the arrogant are sensitive. The Nazis' arrogance was not proof against that kind of retaliation.

Another way of riling them was by the display of the national colors and unobtrusive demonstrations of loyalty to the royal house. In Holland an orange flower in the buttonhole was an offense against the safety of the Third Reich! The white carnation was no less dangerous as it had been made popular by Prince Bernhard, and to appear in public with his favorite flower was an act of defiance against the oppressor. The Nazis' war against the national colors was a tribute to the people's loyalty to the royal house. They knew that in that loyalty the nation, politically disunited, found a common bond and a source of moral strength. That is why they tried to represent Queen Wilhelmina's departure for England as a betrayal of her trust and of her people. But since that slander, widely propagated by the Nazi-controlled radio and press, had no effect on the Dutch, all visible tokens of enduring allegiance to the House of Orange were struck by the German ban: "The gathering and having in stock of certain kinds of flowers such as orange-colored blooms, marigolds, white carnations, and forget-me-nots will be considered attempts at provoking forbidden demonstrations." It was amusing to see the Master Race that had terrorized Europe with its *blitzkrieg* in such a quandary over the display of a few harmless flowers.

The queen's withdrawal to London was a move dictated by

the government's responsibility for her safety. On the body of a German general who was shot down with his plane on the first day of the invasion a document was found containing two sets of instructions. The first assumed that no resistance would be offered to the invading forces, in which case guards should be stationed in front of various specified buildings including the palaces of the royal family. If, however, the Dutch should be disloyal enough to put up a fight against "their German protector," the second instruction should apply. This ordered the capture of the members of the royal family and of the entire cabinet and their immediate transportation by plane to Berlin, where the prisoners would be dealt with in accordance with the resistance offered. The Nazi code of honor did not respect an enemy who resisted attack, but wreaked vengeance on him for fighting back, and the braver the resistance, the harder the punishment.

The story of King Leopold's capitulation affords convincing proof that Queen Wilhelmina took the wise and only right course. Premier Hubert Pierlot and Paul Henri Spaak, the Belgian Foreign Minister, pleaded with the king to escape lest he should fall into German hands. King Leopold asked, "What is Queen Wilhelmina doing in London?" "Carrying on the war," answered Pierlot. "Do you think she is right?" His ministers did think so, but they could not make His Majesty see it their way. They argued that he owed it to his country to guard himself against captivity. "Your Majesty can make peace only as a free king, not as a prisoner." But they could not shake Leopold's determination to remain with his army in Belgium. "And you," he said to his ministers, "shall remain with me to govern." "Do you think Hitler would permit it?" asked Pierlot. The reply to that last question was given by subsequent events. The king became a prisoner of the Germans, and the ministers whom he

refused to follow into exile disowned him as their king. He had taken the heroic course that his sense of honor and his devotion to his people showed him. It was, perhaps, impossible for a young and ardent soul to take any other. But the wiser course would have been to accept the advice of his responsible ministers. Once a prisoner in the hands of the enemy, he had to be disowned and deprived of his kingship, lest the Germans should claim that they had captured the state in the head of the state. Hitler's prisoner at Laecken was merely a crownless young nobleman whose words and acts carried no weight, whereas Queen Wilhelmina in London carried on the war and governed her realm, of which the territory occupied by Hitler's forces was only a small, though significant, part.

The oneness of that realm outlasting the rupture inflicted by external forces was given practical expression, when, on June 8, 1942, an Extraordinary Advisory Council was constituted in London whose sixteen members included four representatives of the East Indies, one of Curaçao, one of Dutch Guiana, and ten of Holland. It was a Council of the Realm called to advise Her Majesty's Government on all affairs relating to its parts in Europe, Asia, and America. There was need for the establishment of such a body, for through force of circumstance the government in London ruled by royal decree, there being no Parliament that could pass on legislative proposals initiated by the government.

In prewar days the legislative power of the people's representatives was practically absolute. The Crown's collaboration, it is true, was required for the enactment of bills, as proposals passed by the legislature did not become law until approved and proclaimed by the monarch. The monarch had the right to withhold approval, but it was customary for the Crown not to withhold it. But in these abnormal days the government in exile had

to manage as best it could without a parliament, for the large majority of the people's representatives stayed behind in the occupied territory. A democracy without a parliament is a contradiction in terms. Yet its abeyance did not change the monarchy into a dictatorship, since the responsibility for the enactments proclaimed by Her Majesty rested with her ministers, who might be called to account by the legislature when the government after the war had returned to the liberated fatherland. But for the time being the government machine had to function without any parliamentary check. The Extraordinary Council was not, of course, a substitute for the missing branch of the government. It was a makeshift device for easing the heavy load of responsibility that rested upon ministers who must dispense with the guidance once drawn by them from parliamentary debate. The full responsibility remained theirs, but it was borne with a firmer spine and a freer heart in the knowledge that the best-informed minds of the nation approved of their actions.

The return of the queen after the liberation was the occasion of nationwide rejoicing. She was acclaimed wherever she went with moving demonstrations of the people's loyalty and love. They knew that hers had been the strongest and most determined will among the Netherlands government in exile. But the jubilation was a surface joy. Underneath was a mood of sadness and mournful remembrance. So much of the old Holland that Wilhelmina had left behind five years before was irrevocably lost. The Hague, once the garden city of Europe, had been robbed of its woodland beauty, the center of Rotterdam was a waste of rubble, many old cities bore the scars of mutilation, the low polder lands were immersed under stagnant water and were not likely to regain their former fertility for years to come. And there was mourning in many a home for those who would not return.

Then, not long afterwards, distressing news came from Java.

The Indonesians under the leadership of Sukarno had risen up in arms and proclaimed their independence. The uprising itself was less alarming to the Dutch than the impression created abroad that the fifty million inhabitants of Java were disaffected and bitterly hostile to the Netherlands government. The Dutch were confident that this was not the case. Foreigners who had never lived or traveled in those islands of the Malay Archipelago were apt to jump at the conclusion that there was widespread discontent and that, consequently, Dutch rule was reaping the fruits of its own sowing. One might just as well argue that, because there is widespread unrest among the labor forces in this country, American democracy must be a failure. It is, of course, just the other way round. The democratic system of government has given to the workers a sense of participation in it and has raised, in consequence, their self-assertiveness. The Nationalists in Java were not clamoring for independence because Dutch rule was unbearable, but because the Dutch had taught them how to achieve independence. That was the tragedy of the conflict: the ultimate aim of the Netherlands government was not different from that of the Nationalists. The difference was in the tempo of the march of events toward the common goal. Sukarno and his adherents said, "We must have independence now." The Dutch replied, "Be patient and let us continue to help in the building up of an autonomous Indonesia."

One does Sukarno an injustice by calling him a quisling. Quisling had the choice between siding with his own people or with the German invader, and he chose the traitorous role of delivering Norway to the enemy. Sukarno's aim was not to deliver Java to the Japanese. He did not help the Japanese in the hope of seeing his people enslaved by them, but found them useful in helping him achieve Javanese independence. He could not have expected greater happiness for Java under Nippon than

under Netherlands rule. He either took Tokyo's promises of freedom for Indonesia within the Great East Asian co-prosperity sphere at their face value, or he counted on the ultimate failure of Japan's bid for empire. Java, he reasoned, would be the gainer in either event. His patriotism was above suspicion.

But did he realize that this love of country that inspired him was awakened to self-consciousness and self-assertion by the training he was given under Dutch rule? Kartini, one of the noblest of Javanese women, who emancipated herself and others of her station in life from the social bondage in which nobly born girls were held captive among Java's aristocracy, once wrote to a Dutch correspondent, "It may sound strange but it is, nevertheless, a fact that you Europeans have taught me to love my own land, our European education has brought us nearer to it, has opened our hearts to its beauties and also to the needs of our people and to their weaknesses." Nationalism in Java is the fruit of Dutch education, and the Nationalists who, after the expulsion of the Japanese, refused to submit again to Dutch rule were turning into practice what they had been taught by their guardians. The guardians were taken aback by the suddenness of this self-emancipation. They considered it premature and ill-advised, but they had no reason to complain of Javanese ingratitude. There is always an unavoidable element of ingratitude in the ward's escape from tutelage. It is a foolish parent who resents his children's declaration of independence.

The dilemma in Java, therefore, was not a question of right or wrong. It was a question of wisdom and expediency. Would Sukarno and Mohammed Hatta be able to set up a native government that would have the backing of all the Javanese people? The island's population is not homogeneous. Would Sudanese, Javanese, and Madurese work harmoniously together? And if so, would the Javanese rulers be able to maintain the political

unity of Indonesia, which is the creation of Dutch rule? Failure on their part in these respects would result in civil strife, upset the archipelago's economy, threaten the densely populated island of Java with famine, reduce or stop the supply of valuable products essential to the well-being of the world at large, and compel the great powers to intervene at the risk of unleashing a new war.

Dutch rule in the Indies has been criticized in the American press and over the radio for having intentionally neglected to educate the masses, and America's fine record in the Philippines never fails to be quoted on such occasions so that the picture of Dutch inefficiency shall look all the worse. The comparison is most unjust. In the Philippines, the Americans found a population that had been forcibly Christianized by the Spanish conquerors. Augustinian friars accompanied Miguel Lopez de Legaspi when he took possession of the islands in the name of His Christian Majesty, King Philip II. His was essentially a missionary conquest. As a result the Filipinos are the only large mass of Asiatics that has been imbued, through three centuries of Christian practice, with the culture and the ideals of the Christian Church. Here was a receptive soil for the seeds of Western education.

In the East Indies, on the other hand, the Dutch had to deal with a Mohammedan population that was impervious to the preaching of Christianity. It was easier to convert the pagan tribes of Sumatra and Celebes than the faithful followers of the Prophet. Western teaching did not find here a receptive audience. Compulsory education could not be introduced. That would have led to resistance and riots. Only tact, persuasion, and patience had to coax the people into school. That was a slow, uphill labor, but the slowness was never engineered by Machiavelian administrators for the purpose of keeping the masses ig-



norant and amenable. In 1939, forty per cent of the native youth of school age was receiving elementary education. To be fair to the Dutch, one should compare that figure not with the percentage of literacy among the Filipinos, but with that among the Moros and other non-Christian tribes in the Philippines.

Modern Holland is partly the product of her colonial expansion. Her commerce, her industries, her international prestige would be less impressive than they are if she had not exercised control over those overseas territories. The Dutch, indeed, owe a great deal to the East Indies. But the East Indies, in their turn, owe a great deal to Holland. The Dutch were long guilty of selfish exploitation of Java's natural resources, but under Liberal leadership in the sixties and seventies of the past century they awoke to a realization of the duties and responsibilities that their possession of these islands involved, and during the reign of Queen Wilhelmina they administered the islands as humane guardians, preparing their wards for an autonomous future within the Netherlands realm.

Generations of Hollanders have lived and labored in the Indies and left the imprint of their activities upon the land. There are few families in the Netherlands that have no ties with those tropical islands. For many Dutchmen, Java, not Holland, is their real fatherland, the land of their birth, the scene of their earliest memories. Inter-marriage between the white and brown races has strengthened the ties that bind Holland and the Indies together. A Hollander's home in the Indies never looked like a makeshift establishment that he seemed ready to leave at the earliest possible moment. It was furnished with the care that one gives to a place where one intends to stay. And many Dutch families did stay in the Indies. Bandung, in the mountains of the Preanger Regencies, has been a favorite resort of permanent residents. The time is long past when the Hollander thought of

Java as an unhealthy region where one went, at the risk of one's life, to get rich quick. The vast majority of Hollanders who went there in this century earned modest incomes for which they have worked hard and conscientiously on plantations, in schools, and in private or government offices. They worked side by side with Indonesians, not as envious rivals but as collaborators. And a vast amount of literature in Dutch testifies to the loving labor that has been devoted to Indonesia and her people by missionaries, educators, historians, archaeologists, engineers, physicians, each of whom has contributed his share to the development of her natural resources, the knowledge of her past, or the betterment of her people's welfare.

For those Hollanders in the Indies who have survived the recent turmoil it is hard to see the fruits of their life's work thrown into the discard or destroyed. To them this is the end of all their hopes. What they hoped for and actually considered possible was a restoration of conditions as they existed before the Japanese invasion. But the clock cannot be set back, not even in the proverbially static Orient. The Far East has ceased to be static; a return to the past is impossible. The long ebb of submissiveness is over, the tide of self-assertion is rising, not only in the Malay Archipelago but all over the Asiatic continent.

There are still Hollanders who cannot see it this way. They can account for the Indonesian revolt only as a Japanese plot. If the Japs, they say, had not been given time after their surrender to foment this revolt, Java would again be the peaceful paradise it used to be. That, of course, is a delusion. Japanese intrigue was, no doubt, a contributing cause of the uprising, but the time-bomb planted by the defeated invader could not have wrought havoc over so wide an area if inflammable matter had not spread all over Java.

Sutan Shahrir, a prominent figure among the leaders of the

new republic, wrote nine years before its proclamation, "Great social changes have taken place and time has leveled contrasts. There is much less show of self-importance among the rulers than there was some fifteen years ago, and also more self-confidence among the Indonesians. The abnormality of this colonial form of society, which results from those psychical relationships, is gradually disappearing, neither through the ethical policy of the Dutch rulers, nor through the conscious determination of the ruled, but through the automatic process of penetration by the modern production apparatus to which society is adapting itself."

In other words, what has happened was bound to happen. But that does not absolve the Dutch in Shahrir's judgment from all blame. They could have cushioned the shock by a more farsighted policy. Shahrir's chief grievance against them is not that they presumed to rule Indonesia, but that they did not use the power they wielded for the westernization of the islands so as to make them an integral part of the modern world.

The Dutch, I believe, were more farsighted than Sutan Shahrir gives them credit for. They saw the goal farther off, in a more distant future, which does not prove their vision impeded by myopia. Their policy during the past few decades endeavored to strike a balance between the universal trend toward westernization and the desirability of preserving native ways and institutions. This concern for the salvage of much that is indigenous often interfered with the tendency, also government-fostered, toward political unification. The Malay Archipelago, with its countless islands, presents a bewildering diversity in language, tradition, and level of culture. The political horizon of the overwhelming majority of the native peoples is the limit of the village commune. Inhabitants of different islands are strangers to each other. There would be no cohesion between the scattered

parts of this vast island realm were it not for the Netherlands administration that held them together. The tendency to create unity out of that diversity was inherent in that administration, but the process of unification was crossed and retarded by the Hollander's tolerance and respect for that which is precious to others. Much patience and a talent for compromise were needed to work out an administrative system that combined the utmost of necessary unity with the preservation of what was best in local practice. The Dutch possessed both and turned them to good use in devising a government machinery that made the whole function satisfactorily without destroying the identity of its component parts.

The Dutch nation, therefore, has no reason to be ashamed of its Indonesian record under Queen Wilhelmina. Her reign was noteworthy for the political, economic, and social reforms that it brought to the Indies. She was a champion of social justice both at home and in the overseas territories; to reap strife and revolt where she had planted peace, prosperity, and justice was perhaps the bitterest experience of her life. And hard to bear was the treatment accorded to her government's spokesmen in the United Nations Security Council who tried to explain to a skeptical international audience only superficially acquainted with the issues involved that what the United Nations wanted was exactly what the Dutch had been working for during Her Majesty's reign. The Council's interference was bitterly resented by the people in Holland, and their government gave official sanction to their outraged feelings when it raised the question of the Council's competence to deal with internal affairs of the Netherlands realm and proposed that the controversy be submitted to the International Court of Justice at The Hague.

The Netherlands government harmed its own case when, irked by delays and repeated infractions of the truce, it began an

ill-advised military action. The use of armed forces was backed up chiefly by the clerical parties, the Calvinists and Catholics; it found no favor with the parties of the Left, the Liberals and Socialists. When it became clear that the troops, though successful in attaining their military aims, could not restore social order, and that their so-called police action had seriously damaged the nation's prestige in the eyes of the world, wiser counsels began to prevail at The Hague.

A new government headed by a member of the Socialist party took over and adopted a conciliatory attitude. The Dutch forces withdrew from Jogjacarta, the capital of the Indonesian Republic, its imprisoned leaders were set free, the negotiations at Batavia were resumed and resulted at last in a new cease-fire agreement. And three weeks later, on August 23, 1949, a round-table conference opened at The Hague, at which Dutch delegates met with representatives of the United States of Indonesia comprising the Republic and the fifteen other Malayan states that chose not to be included in the Republic. The deliberations lasted for ten weeks.

A settlement was arrived at on November 2, under which the parties agreed to create a Netherlands-Indian Union. The United States of Indonesia agreed to recognize the Netherlands monarch as head of their union with the kingdom in Europe, but obtained from the Dutch recognition of their right to govern themselves as co-equal partners of the Netherlands. The official transfer of sovereignty took place on December 27, 1949, in the Royal Palace at Amsterdam. The Queen of the Netherlands signed and handed to Mohammed Hatta, Premier of the United States of Indonesia, the Act of Transfer and Recognition, and thus a new nation came into being, one that is destined to play an important part in the near future of the Far East.

The Indonesian rulers cannot have been in earnest when they

set up a federation of the different geographic and ethnic groups in the archipelago and agreed to the construction of a political union of that Federation with the Kingdom of the Netherlands. As soon as they had affixed their signatures to the documents that created them, they began to demolish both. The Federated States were bullied into an amalgamation with Sukarno's Republic, and Indonesia, instead of being a Far Eastern counterpart of the United States of America, now pretends, in spite of the ethnic diversity of its component parts, to be an integrated State. And the political union with the Kingdom was openly condemned by the very men who solemnly agreed to it as a vestige of colonial rule for which no Indonesian government could hope to win the people's confidence. Instead of trying to educate them toward respect for international agreements they chose the easier way of disavowing these themselves. In August, 1951, they sent a representative to The Hague whose mission it was to conclude a treaty with the Netherlands that would replace the partnership into which they had entered only twenty months earlier. The government at The Hague did not insist on maintenance of the union. There can be no partnership where readiness to cooperate is not mutual, and rather than continue a bond that the facts did not warrant, it chose the wiser course of letting the unwilling partner have his own way.

The royal signature on that historic document, the Act of Transfer and Recognition, was not Wilhelmina's, but that of her daughter, Juliana. On the sixth of September, 1948, the fiftieth anniversary of her inauguration as Queen of the Netherlands, Wilhelmina abdicated in favor of her daughter. In the previous month of May she had informed her people over the radio that fatigue and the complex problems of government had persuaded her to transfer the royal authority to younger hands. The final decade of her long reign had been, indeed, its most

trying period. During the Nazi occupation she had shared her people's anguish, and its pain was the harder to bear because she could not be among them. She had the satisfaction of seeing her country recover more quickly than the most optimistic forecasts anticipated. Hard work and a stringently controlled economy put the nation back on its feet. The hope, often voiced during the Nazi terror, that it would emerge from the ordeal more firmly united was not realized, however. Its political make-up presents the old jigsaw-puzzle pattern of splinter parties, and sectarianism is still as rank a growth as it was before the war.

There is one loyalty that all the people, whatever else may divide them, share together: their devotion to the monarchy. Queen Juliana faces a perilous future, but she is more fortunate than the King of the Belgians in knowing that she faces it with the staunch support of all but her Communist countrymen. On March 12, 1950, the Belgian people voted for or against the return of Leopold III, their exiled king. Forty-three per cent of the electorate declared by their ballot that they preferred him to stay away. Theirs was not a vote against the monarchical system. They rejected him for having proved himself unfit to rule as a constitutional monarch. Unlike Wilhelmina, he followed a personal policy disapproved by his ministers, who refused to accept responsibility for it; he shocked his subjects by traveling in 1940 to Berchtesgaden and hobnobbing with Hitler over a cup of tea, and by having the Führer authorize his second marriage and by accepting his flowers and congratulations. Sentiment among the Flemings, who are solidly Catholic, was in favor of the king's return, opposition to it was strongest in the industrial Walloon provinces. The king, who should be the symbol of national unity, had thus become the storm center of national strife. Fortunately he himself realized the danger that threatened his country if he should insist on ruling with the consent of only half the nation.

He bowed to the will of a strong and determined minority and abdicated on behalf of his young son, Prince Baudouin.

Belgium needs internal quiet and harmony to play her part in the concert of nations attempting against heavy odds to bring about a federated Europe. Together with Holland and Luxembourg she is engaged in forming an economic union, the Benelux Union so-called. Its secretariat in Brussels, a body of experts, started work in 1946 on preparing a common tariff which must be lower than the Belgian and higher than the Dutch, after which it will have to tackle the demolition of tariff barriers between the two countries. Benelux is a regional symptom of that general desire for federation which prompted the convocation of a Congress of Europe at The Hague in 1948, when all western European countries were represented except Germany, Spain, and Portugal. The Congress set up a Consultative Assembly, which met for the first time at Strasbourg from August 10 to September 9, 1949. The discussions brought out the many obstacles in the way of European union, obstacles so high and forbidding that the delegates could not be blamed for being discouraged and disillusioned.

The experience of the past is not calculated to buttress the nations with confidence. The various approaches made in former ages toward the ideal of unity are a sad array of shattered hopes: the sway of the Church of Rome over medieval Europe, the sway of French culture over the Continent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Napoleon's abortive European empire, the successive Internationals hailed by organized labor and betrayed by it in the hour of national danger, the League of Nations defied and abandoned by Fascism and National Socialism. Still, man cannot endure for long the contemplation of the hard face of experience; his will to live needs the dream. Even the



people of the Low Countries, by nature practical-minded realists, refuse to be disheartened. They persist in believing, in the teeth of everything that mocks their belief, that unity is bound to come. The alternative is annihilation.

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